

A N
INTRODUCTION

To the READING of the
HOLY BIBLE.

By a LADY.



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P R E F A C E.

AS I did not compile the following Sheets, with a View either to Fame or Profit, there is little Occasion to apologize for them by a Preface. The Want of such a Work is but too well known to all the thinking Protestants in this Country, and that is my sole Inducement for publishing of it. If it answers the desired End, I shall go to the grave in Peace, satisfied that I have not lived altogether in vain.

THAT the sacred Oracles contain all necessary religious Truths, is most certain, but the Sublimity of the Stile, and the many figurative and allegorical Turns we meet with in the Bible, make it appear very obscure to young and ignorant Readers. There are also some Passages in the Scripture, which from the Change of Manners, and perhaps defective Translations, may as well not be read till we attain to Years

of discretion. A great deal too of what should be early taught requires Explanations, which unfortunately, those who have the training up of the lowest but most numerous and valuable part of the community, are not always well acquainted with.

AND indeed, it must be confessed, that nothing is more difficult than to find Means to convey such sublime Ideas and extensive Knowledge in the puerile Language, and to ground Children so completely in the whole Orthodox Faith, as to defend them against the Seductions of Error, without using one Word that is not familiar to them: And yet if this be not carefully attended to, the very best Instructions can only embarrass and weary them, and most probably will mislead and draw them into some fatal Mistakes.

THE only Merit therefore which this Work pretends to, is the Simplicity of the Diction. That was what I particularly aimed at, and have had the Satisfaction to find, by repeated Trials, that it is perfectly intelligible to the youngest Scholars, tho' I ventured gradually to raise the expressions

sions and extend the Language, as I went on, in order to enable my Readers when they have got through it to proceed to the Fountain Head. With Regard to the Method of teaching this Book, that which I have experienced to be most for the Ease of Master and Pupil, is the following.

WHILE the Children are employed at any Work, let their Master or Mistress read to them one of these Stories by Way of Amusement, beginning with the first, and it will naturally entertain and interest them. When each has repeated it again to the Master, not in the Words of the Book, but in their own (retaining however all the Sense) then read them the next Story.

THE Questions and Answers at the End of the Chapters are of too much Importance to be passed over lightly, but they should not be taught by Rote. If the Children do not spontaneously ask those Questions themselves, let the Master first suggest and then answer them. Let him occasionally repeat those Doubts to them, and he will judge by their Answers, whether they have really imbibed their Mean-

ing or not, and if it appears that they have not, he must again read to them the Answers as in the Book, till they are perfectly fixed in their Minds.

ALL this may be done in an easy good humoured Way, as an Indulgence, and not as a Task. A little every Day will bring them on as fast as I should wish. For if they keep to one Chapter a whole Fortnight, including any Psalms or Prayers arising from it, they will be perfect in the Whole within a Year, which is soon enough. They ought by the End of that Time to know how to read the New Testament, if not, it can be read to them, and I will venture to say, it will both please and edify them, after they have been so prepared. I suppose it is unnecessary to caution such Masters as are disposed to observe the foregoing Directions, that they must take Care before they teach every new Lesson, to know whether the Children remember the Substance of all the preceding Ones. This is very easily done in the Way of Conversation, and by trying whether they retain the Titles of each Chapter in their regular Succession.

HAVING

HAVING now, I hope, sufficiently explained the Intention and Use of this little Piece, I shall in Conclusion, only add thus much.

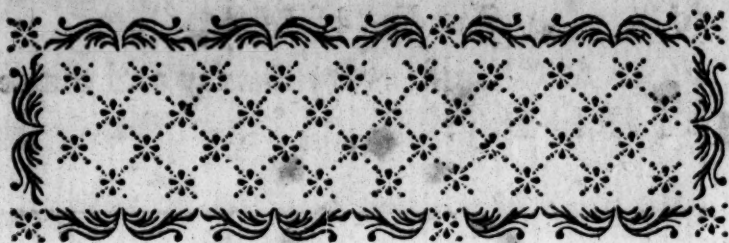
THAT I think it absolutely necessary for us Protestants, who are in a Country, where the Majority are Roman Catholicks†, to guard our young People against the Pains that may be taken by the *Popish* Clergy to convert them to their Faith, and I do not know any better Preservative than to make them acquainted with the one Religion and the other, and the Sources from whence they are derived.

IN so doing, I hope I shall give no Offence to any Party, as I mean none. Being fully convinced, that my own Religion is the true One; I wish to propagate it, and the most tenacious Roman Catholick will surely not blame me for that, because he does the same. I have ever lived in perfect Peace and Charity with all who are

† This Book was originally designed for the Use of the Charity Schools in *Ireland*, when it was first printed.

of that Communion. I have a sincere Friendship for some among them, and the worst that my Heart dictates towards any of them with Regard to Religious Matters, is what St. *Paul* said to *Agrippa*, “ I would to God, that they were not
“ almost, but altogether as I am.”

I think myself obliged in some Degree to add, that since the former Publication, a spurious Edition has, I find, been printed by a Clergyman (a total Stranger to me) in his own Name, with a few Alterations and Additions: In which mutilated State, I can have no Objection, to the Reverend Gentleman's taking the Honor of it to himself; since he finds it convenient.



A N

INTRODUCTION, &c.

C H A P. I.

The Creation.

WE find by the first Chapter of the Book of *Genesis*, which is the Beginning of the Holy Bible, that God Almighty made the World in six Days. He made the Sun, Moon, Birds, Beasts and Fishes, and he also made the first Man. He formed him out of Clay, then breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life, and called him *Adam*, and gave him Power over every Thing upon Earth.

The seventh Day he rested from his Works and commanded it to be kept holy for ever, which is one of the Reasons why

we go to Church every *Sunday* and make it a Holy Day.

Ques. Who has the greatest Power?

Ans. God. For he made every Thing, can do what he pleases, and there is none can resist him.

Q. Who has the greatest Goodness?

A. God. For he gave us Life, and all we have. He keeps us from all Harm, and loves us as long as we endeavour to be like him in Goodness.



C H A P. II.

The Fall of Man.

GOD Almighty put *Adam* into a fine Garden, called *Paradise*, or the Garden of *Eden*; and God said, Man should not be alone, he would make a Companion for him; so he caused *Adam* to fall into a sound Sleep that he might not feel any Pain; then took one of his Ribs and made a Woman of it. He gave this Woman

man

man to *Adam* to be his Wife, who loved her exceedingly, and called her *Eve*.

Our kind Creator, being all Goodness, and desirous to make us happy, gave *Adam* and *Eve* every Thing, except one Tree which stood in the Middle of the Garden. He forbid them to touch the Fruit of that Tree, and told them if they did touch it, they should die.

They lived very happy in that Garden for some Time. They eat fine Fruit, they gathered pretty Flowers, and had nothing to trouble them, because they were Good and Innocent. They might have been there still even to this Day, and we with them, if they had not offended our good God, and brought Death upon themselves, and upon all that belonged to them, by eating some of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, which God had forbid them to taste. How do you think this happened? Why by hearkening to bad Advice. That Evil Spirit, called the Devil, came to *Eve*, in the Shape of a certain Beast, called a Serpent. He, for the Sake of Mischief, persuaded her to eat some of the Forbidden

A 6. Fruit,

Fruit, and she was so foolish and so wicked as to be prevailed on by him. When she had eat some of it, she desired her Husband to do the same, and he was simple enough to eat some too. But when they had done eating they were ashamed, and grew very uneasy, and went to hide themselves behind the Trees in the Garden. All People who have done wrong are troubled in Mind, it is only good People which are pleased with themselves and with the rest of the World, because they know they have done well, and that God loves them, and every Body will speak well of them.

These two foolish People *Adam* and *Eve*, thought in their fright to hide themselves from God, but he knows every Thing, sees every where, even into our Thoughts. He called to them and asked them, why they had eaten of the Fruit which he had commanded them not to touch. *Eve* answered, that the Serpent had persuaded her, and *Adam* said his Wife had persuaded him. God is not to be put off with Excuses, what he commands must be minded. So he directly turned them out of that fine Place, and sent them
to

to wander about in a wild Country overgrown with Weeds and Briars, where they could get nothing to eat but what they dug and ploughed and laboured hard for. There they grew old, and sickly, and died.

Q. How far can God see?

A. He can see every where, for he is not like us. He sees and hears from one Part of the World to the other, and for that Reason all wise People fear God more than Man. It is impossible to hide any Thing from him, and as he loves us he will always punish us one Way or other when we do ill, to make us grow better.

Q. Who is the Devil?

A. He is an Evil Spirit, called a fallen Angel, who, we are told, was turned out of Heaven for his Pride, and goes about doing all the Harm he can. He is able to put bad Thoughts into our Heads, without our seeing him, and sometimes he gets wicked People to persuade us to do wrong, as *Eve* did by *Adam*: but we have Sense enough to know, and ought to consider, that if we follow wrong Advice, God will be angry with us, and that then great Misery must come upon us.

C H A P.

C H A P. III.

The Death of Abel.

ADAM and *Eve* had two Sons, *Cain* and *Abel*, *Abel* was a Shepherd and *Cain* a Gardener, *Cain* was ill-natured and obstinate, but *Abel* was very mild and obedient to God and his Parents. God therefore loved him better than *Cain*, and this made *Cain* jealous of his Brother *Abel*, and made him hate that good young Man. He had much better have strove to be like him, and then God would have loved him as well as the other. One day when the two Brothers were abroad together in a Field, *Cain* knocked down poor *Abel* and killed him. He thought they were alone, and that nobody would ever know it, but God is always present with us. He has not Flesh or Bones as we have, but he is a Spirit, and he also is in all Places at once. He therefore was with *Abel* when he was so cruelly murdered, and called out to *Cain*, and told him that he knew it. *Cain* was then ready to sink into the Earth with Fear, as well he might after such an Action. God drove him away that Moment

into the Land of *Nod*, and put a frightful Mark upon him, so that every Body who saw him run away. He was very unhappy all the rest of his Life, and at last he died.

Q. Where does God live?

A. The chief Seat of God is in Heaven. It is there he sends the Souls of good People after their Death, and they are happy for ever, but he himself is every where at once. He is here now and knows all we are doing, and yet is in every other Place we can think of at the same Time. And as he is all Spirit without any Body, he never is hungry or thirsty, nor ever sleeps as we do: so that there is nothing to take off the Attention of God our Creator from us that are his Creatures.

Q. How was God made, and at what Time?

A. He was never made, for he was before all Time. He made all Things, both in Heaven and Earth, and was always as he is now. When we go to him after Death we shall know him as he is, but now we are not able to understand his Nature.

C H A P. IV.

The Flood.

ADAM and *Eve* had another Son, besides *Cain* and *Abel*, called *Seth*, and also several other Children.

Cain too had a great many Children, and those Children when they grew up to be Men and Women had several Children of their own, so that the World became full of People. After the Death of their Fathers these Children grew very wicked, and God was so offended with them that he resolved to destroy the whole World.

There was however among them one good Man called *Noah*, and God took Care he should not suffer with the rest. He therefore taught him how to make a Sort of large covered Boat, called an *Ark*, and bad him get into it with all his Family, and take with him all Sorts of Beasts and Birds, and then to shut himself up in it.

When he had done so, God sent so much Rain for forty Days and Nights, that the
Waters

Waters rose up to the Tops of the Houses and of the Trees on the highest Mountains, so that the Men, Women and Children, were every one of them drowned. All this while *Noah's Ark* floated safely upon the Waters, and no Mischief besel him, for God was pleased with him. At last the Ark rested upon a high Mountain, which is called *Mount Ararat*, and at the end of seven Months the Rain being gone, God sent a strong Wind to dry the Ground. *Noah* then opened a Window and let out a Raven; this is a Bird that feeds upon dead Bodies, and he found so much to eat that he went back no more. After seven Days *Noah* let out a Dove, which is a Bird like a Pigeon, but it flew back to him very soon, because it could find no dry Place to perch upon. In seven Days more *Noah* let out the Dove again, and it came back with an Olive Branch in its Bill. *Noah* knew by this that the Waters were almost dried-off the Earth, and when he let out the Bird again, it came back to him no more. He soon after ventured to open the Door and go out with all his Family. The first Thing they did was to kneel down and praise God, for having
saved

saved them, as good People always praise God for every Thing, because they know that all comes from him. God was so pleased with seeing *Noah* thankful, that he blessed him and bad him look up and see a Rain-bow, which he told him was a Token, that he never would drown the World again. *Noah* lived a great while after this with his Wife, his three Sons and their Wives and Children. When he grew very old and weak, God Almighty out of his great Goodness, thought fit that he should die and be happy for ever in Heaven.

Q. What is dying?

A. It is for the Life to go out of our body. The Body is then a Corpse and is buried under Ground, because it will corrupt and stink and be fit for nothing but to feed Worms, and will return to Clay which it was first made of, 'till it rises again at the Day of Judgment: But as for our Soul which is the better Part of us, that never dies. They who have been good in this Life are permitted to go to Heaven, thro' the Mercies of Christ our Redeemer, where he receives them after Death,

Death, and where they never feel any more Sorrow nor Sicknefs. No body can hurt them then, and they will always have every good Thing they can defire. As for bad People when they die, God gives up their Souls to that evil Spirit called the Devil, and he carries it to the Place of the damned called Hell, there he torments it all Manner of Ways, and they are for ever miserable. We muft therefore take great Care to please God, who can do what he pleases with us, both now and after we are dead.

Q. What is the greateft Misfortune that can befall us?

A. It is to offend or difplease the great God, who always punifhes thofe that are wicked.

Q. What is the greateft happinefs we can enjoy?

A. It is to be a Favorite of God, who always loves thofe that are good and bleffes them.

C H A P. V.

The Confusion of Babel.

NOAH left three Sons, *Sham*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, and they had a great many Children, who, after their Fathers were dead, did many wrong Things. They took a Fancy to build a Sort of high House called a Tower, that should reach up above the Clouds: But God seeing their Pride confounded them; for he put it into their Heads to speak one in one Language, and one in another, so that they could not understand each other. By this Means, when one asked for Mortar, the other gave him a Trowel, and when another wanted a Ladder, they thought he called for Bricks. This put them all in such Confusion, the Building could not go on. So they left *Babel*, and all went and lived in different Places according as they could understand each others Language; and to this Day one Language is spoke in one Country, and some other in the next Country all over the World.

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Q. What is the most foolish Thing any Body can do?

A. The most foolish Thing any Body can do is to try to follow their own Fancy, without knowing whether it is agreeable to God; for if it is not agreeable to him, he can and will take Care that it shall not Prosper. We should therefore try to like what God likes; because it is in vain to wish for any Thing without his liking, and he knows best what is good for us.



C H A P. VI.

The Destruction of Sodom.

SOME Time after this there was a very good Man called *Abraham*, who had with him a Nephew, his Brother's Son, called *Lot*; and he was a good Man too. So God loved them both, and those he loves he blesses. They were very rich, had a great many Cattle and Servants. The Place where they lived was not quite large enough to hold them all, and their Servants began to dispute with each other. *Abraham* knew it was
a great

22 *The Destruction of Sodom.*

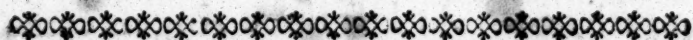
a great Sin to dispute or quarrel, especially among Relations; he therefore said to *Lot*, we had better part. Do you go where you like best, and I will stay in the Land of *Canaan*, or wherever God pleases. Then *Lot* left his Uncle and went to live near *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*. The People of those two Cities were very wicked; and God intended to punish them, as he does all wicked People; but he sent two Angels to save *Lot*. When they came to his House, he took them for Travellers, and received them very civilly; for good People are always obliging, especially to Strangers. After Dinner the Angels told him what they were, and that God had sent them to take him out of that wicked Place, him and his Family, telling him they must leave it directly, and not once look behind. *Lot*, his Wife and his two Daughters set out that Moment with the Angels; but *Lot's* Wife disobeyed God and looked behind her, and for so doing she was turned into a Pillar of Salt. There also fell Fire and Brimstone from Heaven upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, which destroyed those two Cities, and all the People in them perished.

In

In the mean Time *Lot* went on safely to the Land of *Moab*, with his two Daughters, where he lived to a good old Age. His Daughters had Sons that were called *Moabites* and *Anmonites*.

Q. What should we be the most mindful of?

A. Never to forget what God commands, as that simple Woman *Lot's* Wife did. She was certainly very sorry when she found herself turning into a Pillar of Salt, and was losing her Husband and all her Friends, but she ought to have considered that sooner: It was too late after she had committed the Fault.



C H A P. VII.

The Life of Abraham.

ABRAHAM, after his Nephew *Lot* had left him, lived in the Land of *Canaan*, with his Wife *Sarah*. He was so very good a Man, that God loved him exceedingly, and told him *Sarah* should have

have a Son, that that Son should have Children, and those Children would have a great many other Children. That in this Manner he would have a very large Family, and in that Family would be born after a great many Years, *Jesus Christ*, our Saviour, who would redeem us all from the Curse which *Adam* by his Disobedience had brought upon us. After *Abraham* had been told this by God Almighty, he and his Wife *Sarah* lived many Years till they were both grown old, and still she had no Child: *Abraham* was very easy about this, for he knew that what God promises he always performs in his own good Time; but *Sarah* being a silly Woman, fretted and shewed great Impatience. At last three Angels came to him and told him God remembered his Promise, and *Sarah* should soon bring him a Son. She was behind the Door and heard them, and because old Women seldom bring forth Children, she did not believe God's Word, but laughed at what they said, though she might have remembered that God Almighty can do what he pleases. And he from whom nothing is hid, asked her why she laughed? upon which

which she began to be frightened, and said she did not laugh. So she was guilty of two great Faults, the one was telling a Lie, the other was not believing God's Power.

Soon after she had a Son, and he was called *Isaac*. When he was grown a great Boy, his Father was very fond of him, and very thankful to God for his Goodness in having bestowed him, God Almighty had a Mind to shew the World, that *Abraham* loved him as much as he ought: For they who love God as much as his Goodness to us deserves, should be willing to give up their Life, or any thing else to him when he calls for it. God therefore bid him take his Son up to a high Mountain and there sacrifice him, that is, kill him in a certain Manner and burn his dead Body. *Abraham* loved his Son much, but he loved God better, and was always ready to do whatever would please him. So without saying one Word, though grieved to the Heart, he directly took the Boy with him to the Mountain, and was just going to sacrifice him, when God called out to him not to do it, for that he only

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meant to try him for an Example to others. He then came down from the Mountain again very joyfully, with his Son, and God told *Abraham*, that since he had been so ready to obey him, he should see his Son married, and have fine Children; and that he would bless him all Manner of Ways. As for *Sarah*, God Almighty did not think fit that she should live to see her Son married; but after her Death *Abraham* began to think of a Wife for *Isaac*. He did not like any of the Women of that Country, because they were not well behaved; so he sent an old faithful Servant of his into his own Country among his Cousins, to get a Wife for his Son. When the Servant came near the City of *Nachor* in *Mesopotamia*, he stopped at a Well, and kneeled down to pray for God's Blessing, for he knew nothing could be done without that. And he prayed to God Almighty, to send to the Well the Woman he chose for his Master's Son, *Isaac*, and that when he asked her to draw Water for him, she might answer, I will give you Water and to your Camels too; by which he should know that was the Woman God had sent. God Almighty

mighty heard his Prayer, for soon after *Rebekah*, the Cousin of *Isaac* came. He asked her for Water, and she said I will give you Water, and to your Camels too. Then he thanked God that he had found the Woman he wanted, and he went with her Home to her Father's, and asked his Consent to the Marriage. The Father consented, and so did she; after a few Days he brought her to the Land of *Canaan*, when *Abraham* saw her married to *Isaac*, and she made him a very good Wife.

Abraham lived after that till he had seen enough of this wicked world, and then God Almighty took him to a better Place, which is Heaven; where he is still and always will be.

Q. What is most pleasing to God?

A. It is to obey him in all Things, and trust to him in all Things, as good *Abraham* did. *Sarah* did not and so she brought a great many Vexations upon herself, both before *Isaac* was born, and afterwards.

Q. What is an Angel?

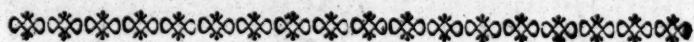
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A. They

A. They are not Men but Spirits, who can fly about and take what Shapes they please. God made, that is, created them for his Service, sends them on all his Messages, and employs them whatever Way he thinks fit. They are very wise, good and innocent.

Q. Who is *Jesus Christ*, and what is Redeeming us?

A. That you shall know by and by, but you must learn a little more before you can understand it.



C H A P. VIII.

The Life of Isaac.

I S A A C and *Rebekah* had two Sons, the eldest was called *Esau*, and the youngest *Jacob*. *Esau* loved rambling abroad, but *Jacob* staid at home with his Father and Mother. One Day *Jacob* was making some Pottage for himself when *Esau* came home from the Fields very hungry, and desired *Jacob* to give him his Pottage; *Jacob* asked him if he would give him his Birth-Right for it, and he said he would.

His

His Birth-Right was his Father's particular Blessing, which in those Days always belonged to the elder Son; and *Esau* was such a Glutton as to sell it for a Mefs of Pottage. He eat the Pottage, which was the Price of the Blessing, and yet afterwards he wanted to keep the Blessing too. This was not honest; for when one has sold a Thing, it then belongs to the Person that has bought it. Old *Isaac* knew nothing of that Bargain; so when he was very old and quite blind, thinking he was going to die, he called his Son *Esau* to him, and desired him to go and get him some Venison, and when it was dressed, to bring it to him for he was very faint. And he told him that when he had eat of it he would give him his Blessing before he died. *Esau* should then have told his Father that he must give it to *Jacob*, for it was sold to him; but instead of that he said nothing to any Body, and made haste to get the Venison. *Rebekah* knew all that had passed, but she thought it was better not to let the old Man know it, because it would grieve him to find that his Son *Esau* was not honest. However, she told *Jacob* of it, and bid him go to his

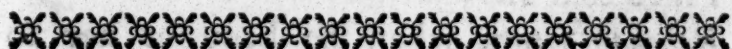
Father before *Esau* came home, and take some Kid with him, and he would think it was *Esau* with the Venison, and would bless him, and so he should get his Right: for what we have bought and paid for is our Right. *Jacob* told her he was afraid his Father would know him when he felt his hands; for *Jacob* had smooth Hands, but *Esau's* were hairy. *Rebekah* immediately found a Way to prevent that, for she made him Gloves of the Skin of the Kid, with the rough Part outward, and giving him the Kid in a Dish, she sent him to his Father. When *Isaac* had felt his rough Hands he thought it was *Esau*, and gave him his Blessing according to the Will of God, who had chosen *Jacob* before *Esau*.

Q. Did *Rebekah* do well to teach her Son *Jacob* to deceive his Father?

A. To deceive any Body is to hide the Truth when you are asked it, or to tell them what is not true. This is a very great Fault, but especially in a Wife to her Husband, or in a Son to his Parent; but *Rebekah* did not deceive her Husband,
nor

nor *Jacob* his Father; they only kept from his Knowledge what they knew it would vex him to hear: And it was no Lie to tell him that *Jacob* was *Eſau* his eldeſt Son; becauſe *Eſau* having ſold to him the Right of Eldership, *Jacob* then was the elder Son: Therefore, if *Rebekah* had ſtood by and let *Eſau* ſteal back the Birth-right he had ſold, ſhe would have been a very bad Woman: But, on the contrary, ſhe contrived prudently to ſee Juſtice done on all Sides, without diſturbſing the Peace of the Family.

We ought never to tell Tales, nor diſcover the Faults of others for the ſake of prating, becauſe that brings on Quarrels, and does Miſchief; but, when we ſee one Body trying to do another any Harm we ſhould hinder them if we can.



C H A P. IX.

The Life of Jacob.

WHEN *Eſau* came home with the Veniſon, and had prepared it for his Father, he brought it to him, but his

Father was much surpris'd, and told him he had been with him already, and had got his Blessing, and asked him why he came for it again. Then *Esau* knew that *Jacob* had been before-hand with him; and though he could not but feel it was just for a Man to take his own when he can, and the Blessing was *Jacob's* own by Purchase, yet *Esau* was so unreasonable as to be very angry, and he swore that when his Father was dead he would kill *Jacob*.

When *Rebekah* heard that, she advis'd *Jacob* to go away, for fear *Esau* should be tempted to do like *Cain*, that murdered his Brother. *Isaac* gave *Jacob* leave to go, and desired he would take a Wife among his own Relations, as he himself had done. So *Jacob* went to his Mother's Brother *Laban*, who lived in the same Place that *Abraham's* Servant had taken *Rebekah* from, when he brought her to *Isaac*.

Jacob travelled on till it was dark, then he lay down in a Field, and set his Head upon a Stone for a Pillow, and fell asleep. He dream'd that he saw a great Ladder, the Top of it reaching to the Heavens,
and

and the Angels of God ascending and descending, that is, going up and down. He dreamed also that God Almighty called to him from the Top of it, and told him he was the God of *Abraham* and of *Isaac*, and that he would bless him too, and he should have so many Children, that they and their Children should be like the Stars in the Heavens, or like Grains of Sand, that are so many they cannot be numbered.

The next Morning after *Jacob* had praised God, as all good People do Night and Morning, he went on his Journey till he came to the Well where *Abraham's* Servant met his Mother *Rebekah*. Soon after he had stopped there, he saw a Girl called *Rachel*, *Rebekah's* Brother *Laban's* Daughter, coming with a Pitcher to draw Water: *Jacob*, who was a very civil young Man, ran and drew the Water for her: Then he told her he was her Cousin, and went Home with her to *Laban* his Uncle. *Laban* was very glad to see his Sister *Rebekah's* Son, and desired *Jacob* to stay and live with him. Soon after *Jacob* desired *Laban* to let him marry *Rachel*;

and *Laban* told him he should have her if he would serve him seven Years. *Jacob* agreed to it ; but at the End of the seven Years, *Laban* was so bad a Man, that he broke his Promise, and, instead of *Rachel*, he gave him his eldest Daughter *Leah*, for a Wife. *Jacob* was very sorry, because he did not love *Leah* so well as *Rachel*, and he asked *Laban* how he could serve him so. *Laban* said, he only did it because it was the Custom of that Country to marry the eldest Daughter first, but if he would serve him seven Years more he should have *Rachel* too. In those Days God Almighty allowed Men to have more Wives than one, though he does not allow it now. What God does is always for the best, as he is wiser than any Body. As for *Jacob*, he was so desirous to marry *Rachel*, that he consented to every Thing ; and he got her for seven Years Service more. *Jacob* lived a long while with his Father-in-law *Laban*, and behaved so well that God prospered every Thing he undertook. He also blessed him with several Children, twelve Sons and one Daughter, called *Dinah* ; but there was only two of the Sons that belonged to *Rachel*, and
their

their Names were *Joseph* and *Benjamin*. At last *Jacob* finding his Family so large, had a Mind to leave *Laban*, and go Home to his own Country and his Father's House. But *Laban* was a selfish Man, he thought of nothing but his own Interest; so because *Jacob* was very useful to him, he did not care to part with him, and wanted that he should remain his Servant all his Life. However, God is always the Friend of the oppressed; that is, of those People who are not well used, and so he was on the Side of *Jacob*. He would not suffer *Laban* to use him ill, but thought fit that he should go away, and *Jacob* went. He took with him his Wives and Children, his Servants, his Cattle and all his Goods.

When they had gone a Part of the Way, some of his Servants who went on before, came running back to him, and told him they saw his Brother *Esau* coming, and several People with him. Then *Jacob* was sadly frightened, and did not know what to do, for he dreaded some Harm to his tender Family; but wise People always pray to God when they are in

Trouble, and he relieves them. *Jacob* therefore prayed fervently, and God put it in his Head what to do. He picked out some of the finest of his Cattle, and of all the best Things he had, and sent them on before him, desiring his Servants, when *Esau* asked him whose they were, to say they belonged to their Master *Jacob*, and that he sent them as a Present to his Brother *Esau*. A soft Answer turneth away Wrath. *Esau* was so moved at *Jacob's* mild and obliging Behaviour, that it drove away all his Anger, and when *Jacob* came near and kneeled down to him, *Esau* took him up and kissed him, and they were very good Friends. This made *Jacob* very happy, for a good natured Man loves Peace and good Humour, and hates to quarrel with any Body. Then *Esau* went and lived in *Mount Seir*, and *Jacob* travelled towards the Land of *Canaan*, where *Abraham* and *Isaac* had lived. In his Way there, he stopped at a Place called *Sichem*, to rest his Family. Then his Daughter *Dinah* took it into her Head to go and visit the Girls of that Country; and when she was abroad, one of the young Men of the Place, Son to
the

the King, took hold of her and ran away with her. When her Brothers heard of it, they ran after him and his Companions; they fought, and there were several People killed. All which mischief *Dinah* was the Cause of, because she did not stay at Home, as sober modest Girls all do. And it grieved poor *Jacob* very much to see how many had lost their Lives by this Accident. Afterwards he went on his Journey, and came to the Land of *Canaan*; but poor *Rachel* died by the Way, and he buried her. About this Time God Almighty was pleased to signify to *Jacob* by an Angel, that he should take the Surname of *Israel*.

Q. Does God allow such near Relations as Brothers and Sisters, or Brothers and Sisters in Law, or Uncles and Nieces, or Aunts and Nephews to marry one another?

A. He did allow it in those Times for some good Reasons, but now he allows no Relations, except Cousins, to marry each other.

There

There was no Harm therefore in such Marriages at that Time, but it would be a very great Sin now, and is called the Sin of Incest.



C H A P. X.

The Story of Joseph.

JACOB was much grieved for his Wife *Rachel*, and he was fonder of *Joseph* than of his other Children, because he was her eldest Son, and was a very good Boy. But his Brothers hated him, and were very jealous of him, because their Father loved him so much: For bad People often hate good People out of Jealousy; and are spiteful to them, and try to hurt them, but God is their Friend, and defends them from all Mischief, and never forsakes them, as you will see by the Story of *Joseph*. The young Man dreamed one Night that he was in the Fields with his Brothers binding Sheaves of Corn, and that his Sheaf stood upright, and their Sheaves bowed down to it. *Joseph* very innocently told his Brothers
this

this Dream, and another Dream that was like it; but they were quite angry when they heard them, and resolved to get rid of him at any Rate.

One Day they being out in the Fields, a great Way from Home, taking Care of the Flock, *Jacob* sent *Joseph* to them to bring him Word how they did. When they saw him coming, they cried out, Here is the Dreamer, let us kill him. But *Reuben*, the elder Brother said, No, we will not stain our Hands with a Brother's Blood; but we will strip him and throw him into a Pit. After they had done it, some Merchants that were going into *Egypt*, passed by, and the Brothers dragged him out of the Pit and sold him to them. Then they killed a Kid and dipped *Joseph's* Cloaths in the Blood, and brought them to poor old *Jacob*, and made him believe that a wild Beast had devoured *Joseph*, that is, had eaten him up. *Jacob* was in the greatest grief that could be for the Loss of so good a Child, and his wicked Sons were so hard-hearted as to see him suffer, and yet not make his Mind easier, by telling him the Truth.

But

But God Almighty directs every Thing for the best, and his holy Spirit went with *Joseph* into the Land of *Egypt*; so that though he was among Strangers, he was not friendless. The Merchants sold him to one *Potiphar*; and he served him some Time, and behaved so well, that *Potiphar* had a great Regard for him. But *Potiphar's* Wife was a very bad Woman, and wanted to persuade *Joseph* to be bad too: However he was too wise and good to yield, that is, to give Way to Temptation; so then out of Spite and Malice, she told a Lie of him to her Husband; and *Potiphar* believing all she said, was so angry with poor *Joseph*, that he sent him to Prison. *Joseph* was always mild and patient and civil, which made every Body love him wherever he went; and the Jailor, that is, the Keeper of the Prison, grew so fond of him, he did not put him in Irons, or fasten him with Chains, like the other Prisoners, nor keep him in one Room, but let him go about the House. There were in the same Prison two other Prisoners; the chief Baker of King *Pharaoh* and his chief Butler, whom they call his Cup-Bearer. The
chief

chief Baker dreamed he had three Baskets upon his Head, full of baked Meats for the King's Table, and that the Birds of the Air came and devoured them. As for the Butler, he dreamt that he held three Branches of a Vine Tree in his Hand, that they were full of Grapes, and that he squeezed them into a Cup, for Wine to serve up at the King's Table. They were both very uneasy to know what these Dreams could mean; and *Joseph* saw, by their Countenances, that they were troubled: He asked them what ailed them, and they told him what strange Dreams they had dreamt, and that they wished to know the Meaning of them.

Dreams very seldom have any Meaning at all, and it is foolish to be concerned about them; for when People sleep badly, their Heads are disturbed, and rambling Thoughts pass through their Minds. But as for those two Dreams, God Almighty directed them on purpose, for wise Reasons of his own, as we shall see by and by. He also put it into *Joseph's* Head to explain those Dreams to them. So he told the Baker that his Dream signified
that

that in three Days *Pharaoh* would order him to be hanged; but as to the Cup-Bearer, he told him he would, in three Days, fill out Wine to the King; and then he begged he would speak for him, that he might be let out of Prison. The Cup-Bearer promised him fair; but when he got out on the third Day, his Joy made him so ungrateful that he forgot poor *Joseph*, who remained in Prison two Years longer.

At the End of that Time God sent a strange Dream to King *Pharaoh*, who wanted to have it interpreted or explained, and none of the wise People of that Country could understand it, because God had not revealed, that is, made it known to them; for we know nothing but what God makes us understand.

So then the chief Butler thought of *Joseph*, and told the King of him; and the King sent for him out of Prison, and said to him. I hear that God has taught you to explain Dreams. I have had a strange one that I wish to know the Meaning of. I thought I saw seven fat Oxen come out
of

of a River, and seven lean ones come after them, who eat up the fat ones. Then *Joseph* told him the seven fat Oxen were seven Years of great Plenty, and after them would come seven Years of Famine, that is, the Weather would be so bad that the Corn would be all spoiled, and there would be none to make Bread for seven Years; and this was the Meaning of the seven lean Oxen that devoured the fat Ones. Then *Pharaoh* said to him, what shall I do when the Famine comes, to find Bread for my People? Upon his saying this, *Joseph* advised him, when the seven Years of great Plenty came, to build Granaries or Store-Houses, and lay up a great deal of Corn in them, so that, in the Time of Famine, the King might sell the Corn to the People for Money, and they would have Bread enough. When the King found that God had made *Joseph* so wise, he set him over every Body, and commanded all the People to obey him. *Joseph*, who was then become a great Man, took Care in the seven Years of Plenty, to build Granaries and provide Corn sufficient to feed the People when the Famine came; and the King had

had such Dependance on him that when any Body came to him about any Business, he sent them all to *Joseph*. The Famine was all over *Egypt*, and in the Land of *Canaan*, where old *Jacob* lived. He was told there was Bread in *Egypt*, but little thought his Son *Joseph* had the disposing of it. However, he sent all his other Sons, except *Benjamin*, into *Egypt*, with Money to buy Corn for Bread. When they were brought before *Joseph*, they did not know him, but he knew them, and he asked them if their Father was alive, and if they had any more Brothers. They told him they never had but two more; one called *Joseph*, who had been devoured by wild Beasts, and the other called *Benjamin*, was at Home with their Father. Then *Joseph* ordered their Sacks to be filled with Corn, and bid his Servants put in the Money too, which they had brought to pay for it. When they were going away he told them that when they wanted more they must bring *Benjamin* with them or they should have none, and he kept *Simeon*, one of the Brothers, to make sure of their coming back. They were all much surprized and

and sadly frightened at this, and much more when they went Home and found the Money with the Corn in their Sacks. *Jacob* said, that might be a Mistake of the Servants, but bid them remember to carry it back, when they went again ; for an honest Man would not cheat another, though he was sure of being never found out, because God sees all we do, and never fails to punish us one Time or other. At last when the Corn was all eat up, *Jacob* desired his Sons to go and buy more. This made them very uneasy, for they durst not go without *Benjamin*, and they knew it would grieve *Jacob* to part with him. At last they ventured to put him in Mind, that the great Man who sold them the Corn, said they should have no more unless *Benjamin* came with them. When poor *Jacob* heard this, he cried, and said, he was already deprived of two of his Sons, *Joseph* and *Simeon*, and if he lost *Benjamin* too, it would break his Heart. Then *Judah*, the eldest Son, begged he would not be uneasy, and promised to take all the Care he could of the Boy, and all the others said the same. So *Jacob* gave them Money to buy more Wheat,
and

and did not forget to send back the other Money that was the Price of the Corn they had bought before. He then suffered *Benjamin* to go with them, and prayed earnestly to God to bless them all.

When they came to *Egypt*, they were brought directly to *Joseph*, who when he saw his Brother *Benjamin*, his Mother *Rachel's* Child, he was so moved he could not help crying with Joy, and turned away, that they should not see him. He then invited them to Dinner, and put five Times more Meat upon *Benjamin's* Plate than upon the others, which they all wondered at. When they took leave, he privately ordered his Servants, after they had filled their Sacks with Corn, to put his Gold Cup into the Mouth of *Benjamin's* Sack. He also desired them to follow his Brothers, and ask them how they could be so ungrateful to their Master, who had been so civil to them, and why they stole his gold Cup, and were carrying it away. They all said, indeed they had not stole any Thing; all their Sacks might be opened, and if it was found among them, they were willing to go to Prison. So
all

all the Sacks were opened, and it was found in *Benjamin's* Sack. Poor *Benjamin* who knew nothing of the Matter, was very much ashamed, and grieved when he saw it, and the Servants said, he must go directly to Prison. Then all his Brothers went back with him to beg him off: For they were not wicked now, as they had been when they sold *Joseph*, but were grown very good, and had rather have gone to Prison themselves than leave *Benjamin* behind; because it would grieve their Father to lose him. So they went back lamenting, and when they came to *Joseph*, they kneeled down before him; and *Judah* begged he would put him in Prison instead of *Benjamin*, and let the Boy go back to his old Father; but *Joseph* pretended to be very angry, and said he would not let him go. This gave all the Brothers the greatest Concern that could be, and they said to one another, God Almighty has sent this Affliction to punish us for having sold our Brother *Joseph*. Then *Joseph* was so moved at finding they were penitent, that is, sorry for their past Fault, he could hold out no longer, but threw his Arms about their Necks, and said,

said, I am your Brother *Joseph*; God, who orders every Thing for the best, sent me here before you, that you might have Bread in the Time of Famine. They all cried with Joy and praised God. Then he desired them to go back to *Canaan*, and tell their Father that *Joseph* was alive, and in Favour of God and Man; and that he must come down to *Egypt*, with his whole Family, where they should all be taken Care of.

When *Jacob* heard the joyful News he made haste to go and see his Son; and as soon as King *Pharaoh* heard that *Joseph's* Father was come, he sent for him, and spoke very civilly to him, and gave him a Place to live in, called, the Land of *Goshen*.

Q. Does God punish wicked People the Minute they commit a Fault?

A. He is sure to punish them one Time or other. Sometimes it is that Moment, like *Lot's* Wife, but, very often not till a good while after, and sometimes he does not punish us till after we are dead,

as

as seems to have been the Case of *Potiphar's Wife*. And this is the worst of all, for then he gives up our Souls to the Devil, who will torment us without Mercy, and without End.

Q. Does God ever forgive People that have done ill?

A. Never, if they do not repent.

Q. What is repenting?

A. It is acknowledging, that is, confessing our Faults, and being very sorry for them, praying earnestly to God to forgive us, and if we have done Harm to any Body, making it up to them every Way in our Power; and taking Care never to offend again. This is true Repentance, or Penitence; but if we are penitent to Day, and Sin again to Morrow, our Penitence is of no Use. Nothing but growing very good, can make up for our past Sins.

Q. What is Sin?

A. It is doing any Thing that God does not like, and he does not like any Thing that can hurt ourselves or other People; or that shows Disrespect to him. He has commanded us never to tell a Lie, or do any Sort of Mischief; to be very modest

C

and

and civil, and to do every Thing we are bid by those who are set over us, if it is not contrary to the Commands of God. Then they will love us, and God will love us too, and we shall be happy in this World and in the next.

You see that the Brothers of *Joseph*, who had been so cruel and wicked towards him, were afterwards very sorry for it, and repented heartily; and when God found they were become very good, he forgave them, and blessed them, and they were very happy. *Joseph* forgave them too; for good People are always ready to forgive offences, as God is ready to forgive us.

Q. What were the Names of *Jacob's* twelve Sons?

A. *Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Napthali, Gad, Asher, Isachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin* *.

* Here teach the Lord's Prayer, and explain it according to all the foregoing History and Doctrine.

C H A P. XI.

The Birth of *Moses*, and the Plagues of
Egypt.

JACOB lived to be a very old Man, and saw a great many of his Children's Children. His Sons after his Death had several more Children, and then they died. And they left so many behind them that they were like the Stars in the Sky, or the Grains of Sand upon the Sea Shore, which cannot be numbered, they are so many. They were called the Children of *Israel* or *Israelites*, because of *Jacob* having been Surnamed *Israel*. A great while after *Joseph* was dead and *Pharaoh* the King was dead, there came another King *Pharaoh* in his Place, who never knew *Joseph*. He was a very bad Man, he hearkened to the evil Spirit more than to God, and used the *Hebrews* very ill. He made them labour very hard in hopes it would kill them, but when he found that would not do, he ordered his Servants whenever a *Hebrew* Woman was brought to bed of a Son to take the Child and destroy it. There was a *Hebrew* Woman
C 2 called

called *Jochabed* who was delivered of a Son. The poor Woman being very desirous to save him, but afraid of the King's Anger, put him in a Basket and carried it to the River *Nile*, and set it among the Rushes, then went a little Way off and left her Daughter *Miriam* to see what would become of it.

Soon after the King's Daughter came with her Maids to bathe in the River, and when she heard the Child cry, she pitied him, and said she would take Care of him. Then little *Miriam* was sent to look for a Nurse, and she brought *Jochabed*. So the Child was nursed by its own Mother; and when he was nursed she brought him back to *Pharaoh's* Daughter, and the King's Daughter called him *Moses*, and gave him a very good Education.

After he was grown up to be a Man, he one Day saw an *Egyptian*, that is a Man of the Kingdom of *Egypt*, using a *Hebrew* very ill; *Moses* was provoked to see his Countryman oppressed, and struck the *Egyptian*, who fell down and died. Then *Moses* was afraid the King would put him
to

to Death, so he ran away to the Land of *Midian*. The Priest or Minister of that Country was called *Jethro*; he married his Daughter to *Moses*, and let him live with him and take Care of his Sheep. One Day as *Moses* was in the Fields feeding his Father-in-law's Flocks, he saw a Bush flaming with Fire, and yet the Bush was not burnt, that is was not consumed by the Fire. He thought this very strange, and drew near to see how it could be, when a Voice called out of it and said, I am the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*, take off your Shoes for the Place you stand upon is Holy Ground. I have seen the Oppression of my People, and I will send you to the King of *Egypt*, to command him to let my People go back to the Land of *Canaan* from whence they came. *Moses* was the meekest Man in the World. He was struck with Reverence and Awe. He fell upon the Ground and said, He feared *Pharaoh* would not mind what so poor a Man as he should say; but God answered, that he would make *Pharaoh* mind him, and that *Moses's* Brother *Aaron* should meet him on the Way and go with him.

After this God bid *Moses* throw his Stick or Wand upon the Ground, and when he had done so it turned into a Serpent. *Moses* was so startled at this he ran away, but God called him back and desired him not to be afraid, but to take hold of the Serpent by the Tail, which when he did, it immediately turned into a Wand again.



C H A P. XII.

Of the Plagues of Egypt.

MOSES then in Obedience to the Command of God went into *Egypt* with *Aaron* his Brother, and when they saw *Pharaoh* they told him, that God had sent them to desire he would let the *Hebrews* go. But the King was so wicked as only to laugh at what they said; and God to punish him, as also to shew his own Power, turned all their Waters into Blood, and all the Fish died. This soon humbled *Pharaoh*, and he begged of *Moses* to pray to God to cure the Waters. *Moses* did pray, and they were cured, and yet he would not let the People of *Israel* go. Then God
sent

sent a great Quantity of Frogs to torment him. They over-ran all the Country, and hopped about in the very Rooms where the King lived. Then he begged of *Moses* to pray to God to deliver him from them, and he promised to let the *Hebrews* go. Immediately *Moses* prayed, and God was pleased to send them away; but when they were gone, the King still refused to keep his Promise. As God Almighty can never be at a Loss how to punish perverse and obstinate People, he sent such a Number of Lice, that the very Dust seemed to be all turned into Lice, and they crawled about them and gave them no rest. Then the King applied again to *Moses*, and they were sent away, but still his Heart was hardened. Afterwards God sent such Swarms of Flies, they looked at a distance like black Clouds, and buzzed about them so intolerably they were not able to bear it. Upon which the King again desired *Moses* to pray for him; *Moses* did, and immediately the Flies were removed. But still *Pharaoh's* Heart was hardened, and he would not let the Children of *Israel* go. So then God sent a Sickness among the

Cattle, that they almost all died; and when that would not do, he sent such Sickness among the People, that they were all covered with Sores and Boils and Ulcers. After that he sent Storms of Hail which killed all those it fell upon, beat down the Roofs of the Houses and destroyed all the Buildings, yet still *Pharaoh's* Heart was hardened, and he would not let the Children of *Israel* go. So then God sent a strong Wind, that brought with it a Number of Locusts, which eat up all the Fruits of the Earth, and every Thing that grows for the Use of Man and Beast. But still *Pharaoh* was only frightened for the Time, and as soon as the Plague was gone he forgot the Goodness of God in hearing his Prayers, and also forgot the Power of God to send a worse Plague, if he provoked him. Wicked People are always foolish. If he had had any sense at all, he would have considered, that what God had done once he could do again, or a great deal worse if he pleased, and that there is no escaping him. At last, however, God Almighty obliged *Pharaoh* to submit to him. He sent an Angel to every House commanding him to kill the
First-

First-born, that is, the eldest Child in every Family, except among the *Israelites*, none of their First-born died. When *Pharaoh* had lost his own First-born, he found God was not to be resisted, and so at last he let the Children of *Israel* go. And the *Egyptians* were so glad of it, because of the Plagues God had sent upon their Account, that they let them have a great deal of Gold and Silver, and several Earrings and Bracelets to carry away. So they went away very rich; and as they travelled along the Spirit of God went before them by Day in a Cloud, and by Night in a Pillar of Fire. At last they came to the Red Sea, but before they got there *Pharaoh* was grown wicked again, and repented that he had let them go. So he called together his Army and followed them. Then the *Israelites* saw nothing but the Red Sea before them, and the wicked King and his Army behind them. They were so terrified they were ready to die with Fear, for they forgot that the Almighty was their Friend, *Moses* prayed to God, and he immediately bid him strike the Sea with his Wand, which when he had done the Wa-

58 *The wandering in the Deſart.*

ters divided on both Sides, and there was a Path between for them to walk through. After they had paſſed over to the other Side, *Pharaoh* thought to follow them the ſame Way with his Army, but the Waters cloſed over them and they were all drowned.

When the *Iſraelites* ſaw this they praiſed God, and *Moses* made a fine Pfalm of Thankſgiving, which they all ſung, and they danced and were very joyful *.



C H A P. XIII.

The wandering in the Deſart.

THE fooliſh *Iſraelites* ſoon forgot their great Deliverance, and the wonderful Goodneſs of God. For finding there was no Water in that Place they began to murmur againſt *Moses* for having brought them there. However, though they little deſerved it, God commanded *Moses* to ſtrike a Rock with his Wand, and then

* Here it will be proper to teach them that Song explaining all the Words in it.

Water

Water flowed out of it : God also was so good to them that he rained from the Clouds a Sort of Grain which made sweet Cakes called *Manna*, and for Variety sent them some very good Birds to eat, called *Quails*.

As they travelled along they met with a King called *Amalek*, who came out against them with a great Army; but God gave the *Israelites* Power over their Enemies, and they got the better of them and vanquished them, that is, beat them in Battle.

One Day God Almighty called *Moses* up to a high Mountain, called *Mount Sinai*, and covered him with a Cloud from the Sight of the People. Then God was pleased to reveal his Will to him, and gave him ten Commandments wrote upon two Tables of Stone, that he might teach them to the People. These are the ten Commandments which are read every *Sunday* at Church, and which we must all learn and observe, because they were given by God Almighty himself, and they teach us our Duty to him and to all the

C.6. World.

60 *The wandering in the Desert.*

World. By the first, second, third and fourth, we learn, that there is no God but one, and that we should fear and love him above all Things, because he made us, and can destroy us in a Moment. We learn by the fifth, to be dutiful to our Parents, and those that are set over us in their Place, and by the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth, we are taught neither to murder, steal, nor do any Manner of wrong. Not to speak ill of any Body, or even to covet, that is, to wish for any Thing that belongs to another. Because, as God Almighty sees our Thoughts, he will punish wicked Thoughts, as well as wicked Words, or wicked Doings*.

Moses was forty Days and forty Nights at the top of *Mount Sinai*, learning all these and many more wise and good Things from God. But in the mean Time the ungrateful *Israelites* grew tired of waiting for him. In their Impatience they supposed he would never come back, and so desired *Aaron* the Brother of *Moses* to make a God for them, that they might

* This is the Time I would advise the teaching the Commandments.

worship

worship, that is, pray to it. *Aaron* was grieved to hear them talk so wickedly, and so simply, but was such a Coward he feared they would kill him if he refused them. Therefore he took the Gold and Silver which the *Egyptians* had given them. He melted it over the Fire, and made an Image of it in the Shape of a Calf, and a great many of them worshipped it, like their Neighbours the *Heathens*, whom God had resolved to destroy for their Idolatry. While they were so doing, *Moses* came down from the Mountain, and when he saw what they were about, he was so provoked that the Tables fell out of his Hand and were broke to Pieces. And God was so offended at their Wickedness, that he commanded *Moses* to draw his Sword and kill several who were guilty of Idolatry, that is, of worshipping the Idol or Image. There were twelve thousand killed that Day, and he made those that were left wander about for forty Years in that Place, which was called a Defart or Wilderness*, before they were permitted to go into the promised Land, as a Punish-

* Here it will not be amiss to teach them the 95th Psalm.

62 *The wandering in the Defart.*

ment for their Stubbornness. God also thought fit to punish several other bad Things, that some of them were guilty of.

Ever since the Fall of Man, God had been pleased to command us to build a Sort of Table with Stones set over one another, or in any other Fashion. This Table was called an Altar, and upon that Altar he bid them lay a Lamb, or a Dove, or some other Thing, and whatever was laid up n the Altar with Wood under it, was called the Sacrifice, because it was sacrificed, that is offered to God. And when God was pleased with those who offered it, he sent down Fire from Heaven to burn or consume the Sacrifice, as a Token that he accepted of it, and he forbad that any common Fire should ever be put to it. But one Day two very bold young Men, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, had the Assurance to disobey, and to put common Fire upon the Altar to burn the Sacrifice; but God soon punished their Presumption by sending Fire from Heaven, which burnt them up, and no Body could save them.

Another Time there was a Man who was provoked by the evil Spirit, to speak
against.

againſt God, his Maker; and this great Sin, is called Blaſphemy. And God Almighty commanded that every one ſhould throw Stones upon the Blaſphemer till he was cruſhed to Death, and it was accordingly done.

Even *Mofes*, who was ſo good a Man, forgot himſelf one Day: He was out of Humour and offended his Maker, the great God, who to puniſh him, ſaid, he ſhould not live till they went to the Land of *Canaan*, but bid him go up to the Top of a high Mountain, and look at it. When he came down again, he was very ſorry for his Fault; God then pardoned him, and when he died his Soul was received into Heaven*.

Q. What is the greateſt Affront that can be offered to God?

A. It is to worſhip or pray to any but himſelf, eſpecially to any Thing that is made with Hands, ſuch as Pictures, or Images, Bones or Relicks, or any Thing

* Here I would adviſe teaching the 105th and 106th Pſalms.

else, as God exprefsly fays in the fecond Commandment; and praying to any Thing but God, is called Idolatry.

Q. Is there any Body now that is guilty of this Sin?

A. Yes, a great many People called Papiſts or Roman Catholicks, who pray to feveral Things, and even to dead People, whom they call Saints. And it is the more furprizing, as every Body knows that the Souls of good People called Saints, are not here but in Heaven, and there is none but God who can be in all Places at once, and can hear and fee from one Part of the World to the other.

Q. How ſhould we behave to theſe Roman Catholicks?

A. We ſhould live civilly, and in a friendly Manner with them, for they are our Fellow Creatures, the Children of *Adam* and *Eve*, as well as we; but if they would perſuade us to do like them, tell them we dare not, for God forbids us in his Holy Bible. If they ſay it is not Idolatry to worſhip Pictures or Images, or to pray for the dead, or if they tell us we ſhould believe any Man before the Bible, do not liſten to ſuch Converſation, but
pray

pray to God to convert them, that is, to teach them better Things, for though they mean well, they talk wickedly, and God permits it to (try or) exercise our Virtue. We should advise them to read, or hear read the Bible, which is the Word of God himself, and that their Priests cannot deny. We ought therefore to believe nothing that contradicts the Bible, for who can know God's will so well as himself. And if they will not read that, and believe what is in it, they will surely believe nothing we can say, therefore it is best not argue with them, for Arguments or Disputes often bring on Quarrels, and when we quarrel God is offended.

Q. Pray how do we know all these Things?

A. God Almighty in his great Goodness was pleased that *Moses* should write them all down, and leave it for us who came after, that we might know his Will and his Greatness.

So *Moses* wrote the History of the Creation. The Fall of Man, the Death of *Abel*, the Flood, the Confusion of *Babel*, the Destruction of *Sodom*, the History of *Abraham*,

66 *The wandering in the Defart.*

ham, of *Isaac*, and of *Jacob*, and the Story of *Joseph*. All these he wrote in one Book, called the Book of *Genesis*. *Moses* afterwards wrote the Account of his own Birth, of the Plagues of *Egypt*, of the Children of *Israel* passing the Red Sea, of their wandering in the Wilderness forty Years, of all that befel them there, and all that God directed them to do.—These Matters are in four other Books, called *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, and *Deuteronomy*, which with *Genesis*, are sometimes called the *Pentateuch*.

God directed those that came in *Moses's* Place after his Death, to write what had happened in their Time. So we have all the History of the Children of *Israel*, almost till the Coming of *Jesus Christ* our Lord. We have also an Account of his blessed Life and Death. All this is together in one great Book, called the Holy Bible, because it contains the Word of God. And the Word of God is called Revelation, because it was revealed, that is told it to us. Some of the Bible is always read in Church: It is the wisest and the best Book in the whole World. Other Books

Books are wrote out of Men's own Heads, or out of what they pick up from others, but the Bible was wrote by the Direction of God himself, and it teaches all that is needful for our Salvation, to make us happy in the World while we live, and in the next for ever.

When you can read it, and are old enough to understand it, you will be allowed to read it all yourself.

Q. What is Virtue? or what is it to be virtuous?

A. It is when we are either tempted or persuaded to do what we know is wrong; to resolve against it, and not to yield to any Body or any Thing, though we like it ever so much, if we know it will offend God. When we are tempted, we must strive hard with ourselves, and pray to God to help us, and then, like *Joseph*, and all other good Men, it will be impossible for bad or foolish People to spoil us, that is to make us do ill.

C H A P. XIV.

The History of Joshua.

AFTER the Death of *Moses*, it pleased God that *Joshua*, the Son of *Nun*, should succeed him, that is, stand in his Place, to shew the Children of *Israel* the Way into the promised Land, defend them against their Enemies, and teach them their Duty to their Maker. He was to instruct them in every Thing that was fit for them to do, and tell them what they ought not to do. For at all Times they who were best and wisest have been set over the rest to govern them and keep them from harm. He that governed the *Israelites* in those Days was called their Judge.

When therefore *Joshua* became Judge of *Israel*, he drew near the first City in the Land of *Canaan*, called *Jericho*, and sent privately into the City to get an Account of the Place and of the People in it. They who are employed in this Manner are called Spies; and when a Spy belonging to the Enemy is found in any Place, he is always

ways put to Death. These Spies were very near being caught in *Jericho*, but a Woman called *Rahab*, who lived near the Gate of the City took Compassion on them. She hid them in her House till it was Night, and then let them out of a Window by fastening Cords to it. Before they went away, she made them promise, that in return, for having saved their Lives, she and her Family should be spared when the *Israelites* got Possession of the City.

After this God commanded *Joshua* to march with all the People to the River of *Jordan*, which ran between them and *Jericho*. He then ordered, that the Sons of *Levi*, called *Levites*, should carry the Ark and walk before the rest into the River, and stand in the middle of it, with the Ark. When they drew near, behold to the great Amazement of all the People, the Waters divided as at the Red Sea, and they passed over without so much as wetting their Feet. Afterwards the People passed over also, and then the Waters immediately returned to their old Place.

The next Wonder that God performed for the Sake of his People, was at the Town of *Jericho*. He commanded *Joshua* to lead them round the Town seven Days together, blowing a Trumpet every Time, and on the seventh Day the Walls of the City tumbled down. By this Means the *Israelites* marched in without any Difficulty, and were Masters of the Place. The People to whom it belonged were such wicked Idolaters, that God commanded the Children of *Israel* to kill them all, except *Rahab* and her Family, according to the Promise the Spies had made her. So they took great Care of her and of all that belonged to her, for what good Man ever forgets those who have been good to him? All the Kings of that Neighbourhood, jealous of their Success, came out at different Times and fought against them, Whenever the *Israelites* acted wickedly, God suffered their Enemies to beat them, and from the Story of one of them, called *Achan*, which is mentioned in the Scriptures, one may learn that nothing is hid from the All-seeing Eye of God. But whenever they repented and behaved well, his Anger was appeased, and then they
again

again became stronger than their Enemies, and the Victory was on their Side. The strongest Proof of the great and wonderful Providence of God towards them appears at the Battle of *Gibeah*. Five Kings were leagued there with all their Armies against *Israel*; but the Almighty God rained Stones from Heaven upon their Enemies, and because the Day was not long enough to destroy such a Number, he at the Prayer of *Joshua*, commanded the Sun and Moon to stand still till there was no Enemy left alive in the Field.

Joshua having thus conquered almost all the Land of *Canaan*, divided it into twelve Parts, according to the twelve Tribes or Families of *Israel*. By which twelve Tribes or Families of *Israel*, is meant the Families of each of the twelve Sons of *Jacob*; whose Names I suppose you remember, as they are all mentioned at the End of the tenth Chapter. He made eleven of the Tribes draw Lots for their Shares, that there might be no Disputes among them. As for those of the Tribe of *Levi*, they did not draw, because God had provided for them in another Way;
for

for he thought proper they should be his Ministers, and always attend the Service of his Church, that is, employ themselves intirely in explaining the Scriptures, praying and doing Sacrifice at the Altar. And as *Joseph*, the beloved Son of *Jacob*, had two Sons, *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, the Lot of *Joseph* fell to *Ephraim*, but as to *Manasseh*, he got that which would have been the *Levites* Portion, if God had not done so much better for them.

Q. What was the Ark which the *Levites* carried before the *Israelites* over the River *Jordan*.

A. It was something like a Box, in which God commanded the two Tables of the Law to be carefully kept, and this Ark he committed to the Care of the *Levites*, and did not suffer it to be produced, but upon extraordinary Occasions.

C H A P. XV.

The Book of Judges.

AFTER all these Things, *Joshua* died in a good old Age, and he had been so worthy a Man, that all *Israel* mourned for him many Days. They remained some Time without any Judge, and being like a Flock of Sheep without a Shepherd, very often went astray. Instead of obeying the Laws of God, which they had been so often taught, and which were sufficient to guide them, they chose to follow the Inclinations of their own Hearts, which were always disposed to Evil. Bad People cannot live long in Peace and Quiet with one another, for they always want more than they have a Right to, and do not scruple injuring others. Unjust Actions must always produce Quarrels, for no Body will let another oppress him if he can help it.

The People of *Gibeah* of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, did a most barbarous wicked Thing by one of the *Levites*, which all the other Tribes resolved to punish them for.

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The rest of the *Benjamites*, instead of chastizing their wicked Relations, took their Part. This brought on a Civil War in which the Tribe of *Benjamin* was almost all destroyed. A Civil War is when People of the same Nation go to War with each other. This was a very bloody one, but when it was over the other Tribes repented having dealt so hardly with their Brethren the *Benjamites*, and they became good Friends again.

They were however much oppressed by their Neighbours, the *Syrians*. They called to God for Help, and he appointed *Othniel* to be their Judge, who fought their Battles and delivered them from their Enemies. After his Death they fell into Idolatry, and then God delivered them into the Hands of the *Moabites*, but when they repented *Ehud* was made Judge of *Israel*, and beat their Adversaries. The next Judge was *Shamgar*, he conquered the *Philistines*, who had fallen upon them, but when he died they returned again. Then a wise Woman, named *Deborah* the Prophetess, and *Barak* a valiant Man, both governed *Israel* together, and gained
a great

a great Victory over the *Philistines*. When the *Israelites* found themselves delivered from their Enemies, they were very joyful; and *Deborah* the Prophetess made a fine Song called a Hymn or Psalm of Thanksgiving, such as we sing in the Churches, to praise God for his Goodness to us.

After the Death of *Deborah*, the *Israelites* fell again into Idolatry, and God permitted the *Midianites* to oppress them for seven Years; but when they were penitent and called to him for Help, he sent his Angel to call *Gideon*, who was threshing Wheat in a Barn, and *Gideon*, with God's holy Help, soon freed them from their Enemies.

When he died, one of his Sons, called *Abimelech*, murdered almost all his Brothers, intending to be King of *Israel*. This occasioned great Disturbances among them, but they were quelled by his untimely Death, for he who thought himself stronger and greater than all Men, would not submit even to his Maker; so God, that he might serve as an Example, caus-

ed his Life to be taken away by a Woman throwing a Stone at him.

Tola was Judge after him, and then *Jair*; in both their Times the *Israelites* provoked God by their Sins, and he delivered them up to the *Ammonites*. After this the People became penitent, and then he gave them *Jephtha* as their Judge. He was a great Warrior, but one rash Action that he committed, made the Remainder of his Life unhappy. When he was going out to fight the *Ammonites*, he vowed, if God gave him the Victory, he would sacrifice the first Thing he met when he returned Home. He did conquer the *Ammonites*, but his only Daughter not having heard of his Vow, was so impatient to see her Father again, that she met him first of all, so to his great Grief he was obliged to sacrifice her according to his Vow. When the poor old Man, *Jephtha*, died, *Ibzan* was Judge in his Place; after *Ibzan* succeeded *Elon*, and after *Elon*, *Abdon* was Judge. When *Abdon* died the *Philistines* oppressed *Israel* very much, till *Sampson* was sent by the Almighty to deliver them. It pleased God to make
Sampson

Sampson the strongest Man in the World. He killed a Lion without any Help, and destroyed many of the *Philistines*. At length he fell into their Hands, but not till he had killed a thousand of them with only the Jaw-bone of an Ass, and then he carried away upon his Back the Gates of the City where he was confined, and made his Escape. But it was not long before they got him again, by the Treachery of a wicked Woman called *Dalilah*. The *Philistines* offered her Money if she would find some Means to deliver him up to them. The Way she took was to persuade him to tell her, as a Secret, what it was that made him stronger than other Men. He held out some Time, but at last he was so indiscreet as to tell her, that his Strength could not be conquered so long as he kept the Hair upon his Head, but the Moment it was shaved off he should be no stronger than other Men. When that base Woman knew the Secret, she watched till he fell asleep, then cut off his Hair, bound him and called to the *Philistines* to come and take him. When he waked and found his Strength gone, he was obliged to submit, and let them carry him.

him to Prison, where they put out his Eyes, and made him labour at turning a Mill.

One Day the *Philistines* made a great Feast to their God *Dagon*, in his Temple, and when they were in the midst of their Mirth and Jollity, they sent for *Sampson* to laugh at him and teize him. But the Time was come when it pleased God to deliver his People from such cruel Enemies, for *Sampson's* Hair was grown again, and with it his Strength returned. So when he found himself in the Room with those vile People, he called upon God to help him, then took hold of the Pillars that supported the Building, and loosening them, the Roof fell down and crushed them all to Death. After this the *Israelites* were quiet for several Years, and *Eli*, the High Priest, became Judge of *Israel*. There was a young Man named *Samuel*, who had been bred up under *Eli* from a Child; and *Samuel* was so pious and virtuous a Youth, that God was frequently pleased to speak with him, and reveal to him his Will, so that he became a great Prophet. As for *Eli* the High Priest he was good himself, but he suffered his Children

dren to be wicked, and that is a great Sin. His two Sons, *Hophni* and *Phineas*, behaved very ill; and though he knew it was his Duty to punish them while they were young, in order to make them better, he gave himself no Trouble about it; and as they were not contradicted, they grew worse and worse. They at last brought on their own ruin, as well as their Father's, for they were killed in Battle by the *Philistines*, who over-ran all the Country: The Ark also was taken; and when old *Eli* heard the News, he fell down and died with Grief. Then was *Samuel* made a Judge in his Place, who kept the People in very good Order, and followed the Will of God in all Things. However, the *Israelites* at last grew tired of having only Judges over them, and had a Mind to be governed by a King, as other nations were, and as we are in this Kingdom. God Almighty, who knows all Things, knew they would never be so happy under a King as under a great Prophet, like *Samuel*, who consulted his Will, in every Thing; but he told them, since they had so great a Desire for a King they should have one. Accordingly he

commanded *Samuel* to anoint a young Man called *Saul*, of the Tribe of *Benjamin*. It is an antient Custom to anoint a King with Oil, before he is crowned; therefore, God commanded it as a Token that *Saul* was the King he had chose for them. *Samuel*, however, still governed *Israel* for a great while longer, because the People knew he was a good Man and a great Prophet.

Q. What is a Prophet?

A. A Prophet is one that God favours so much as to reveal his Will to him, by which Means he knows more than other People, and is able to foretel Things that are to happen, and this is called Prophesying.

Some filly People fancy that Witches and Conjurers have the same Power of foretelling Things, or, as they call it, Fortune-telling; but Witches and Conjurers are all Cheats and Impostors, who pretend to know what they do not know, with a Design to get one's Money, and to cheat one, and 'tis a great Sin, as well

as

as Folly, to ask them Questions, or listen to them.

A true Prophet is very unlike these Cheats; he does not attempt to get our Money, but endeavours to make us good; and may be known by the wonderful Works which God enables him to do, as he did *Moses* and many others. These wonderful Works are called Miracles; but Miracles are now ceased, there have been none since our Saviour and his Apostles left the World, and we have no Reason to expect any more, because the Christian Religion is sufficient for every good Purpose, as you will know when you have learnt it.

Q. What is making a Vow?

A. To make a Vow to God, is to take an Oath when we are in any Distress, that if God will relieve us, we will in return do such a Thing for him. This is a foolish and a sinful Practice, for God is not to be bargained with like a Man. All he does for us is of his own free Goodness, for we can give him nothing, because every Thing is his own, and he can take it when he pleases; and he desires nothing

of us but that we worship him devoutly, and obey his Laws, as he has told us in many Parts of the Scripture.

We should be very cautious, even to make a Vow, or take an Oath to one another, for when once the Words are gone out of our Lips, if they are not unlawful, that is, contrary to the Law, we must perform them. For nothing is so base as not keeping one's Promise; and no Body will regard one after having broke it. But it is still worse even than that, to take a false Oath; that is, to swear a Thing to be true which we know to be otherwise, or to swear a Thing to be false which we know to be true. Either of these Kind of false Oaths are called Perjury; which is a most horrible Sin, such as we can scarce hope to be pardoned for: At least not till after suffering the most severe Punishments, from the Hand of God.

Q. What is a High Priest?

A. The High Priest among the *Jews* was he that was set over the other *Levites* to govern them, and take Care that they did their Duty in praying and reading the Bible to the People, and such Things. As
the

the Archbishops are now set over the Bishops, and those over the other Clergy, the Deans, the Ministers and Curates.

Q. Where do we find the History of these Judges?

A. You will find it all in that Part of the Scriptures called the Book of *Judges*. There were fifteen of them after the Death of *Jeshua*; *Othniel*, *Ehud*, *Shamgar*, *Deborah*, *Barak*, *Gideon*, *Abimelech*, *Tola*, *Jair*, *Jephtha*, *Ibzan*, *Elon*, *Abdon*, *Sampson*, *Eli*, and *Samuel*.



C H A P. XVI.

The Reign of King Saul.

THOUGH *Saul* had been anointed King, he was still too young to govern the People; therefore went back to his Father's House, and staid there till the King of *Ammon* attacked the *Israelites*, that is, made War upon them. *Saul* then remembering he was their King, put himself at the Head of their Army, and beat the *Ammonites*; upon which the *Israelites* were so pleased with his Courage

84 *The Reign of King David.*

and Prudence, that they acknowledged him to be their King. After this, he gained many other Victories, but at last he grew proud and presumptuous, and by that Means lost the Favour of God. He that gave him his Crown resolved to deprive him of it, since he proved unworthy. And so highly was the Almighty offended with him, that he would not permit *Jonathan*, the Son of *Saul*, to be King after him, but fixed upon *David*, the Son of *Jesse*.



C H A P. XVII.

The Reign of King David.

DAVID was of the Tribe of *Judah*, and great Grandson to *Ruth*, who was a very good Woman, and had been remarkable for her dutiful Behaviour to her Mother-in-law. Her Story is in the Holy Bible, and is called, *The Book of Ruth*. Her Son *Obed* was the Father of *Jesse*, and *Jesse* was the Father of *David*.

After *David* had been anointed King by the Command of God, he continued
with

with his Family waiting till God thought proper that he should Reign over the *Israelites*, in the Place of *Saul*.

Some Time after, *Saul* being disturbed in Mind, and very miserable, because he knew he had offended God, desired his Servants to send some Body who could play well upon the Harp, to amuse his Grief. *David* could play better than any Body, so he was sent for. His Musick was so fine that the King was much pleased: He listened to him with Delight, and yet the Moment *David* ceased playing, the Distemper of *Saul's* Mind returned. There is no Cure for a guilty Conscience, but reconciling one's self to God by hearty Repentance and Amendment of Life. So *David* went back to his Father.

Soon after the *Philistines* made War upon the *Israelites*, and sent *Goliath*, a Giant, to challenge any one of them. A Giant is a Man much taller and stronger than other Men: And *Goliath* was so great a Giant, that not one of *Saul's* Soldiers durst encounter him, though *Saul* promised his Daughter in Marriage to the Man that should

should kill him. He came out for several Days together, daring them to Battle; but they were all terrified at the Sight of him. At last young *David* happened to be sent to the Camp, to bring some Provisions to his Brothers, who were Soldiers. When he saw the Giant, and heard his insolent Language, God inspired him with Courage, and he resolved to go out and meet him. All the Army of *Israel* wondered and trembled for him: And, when *Goliath* saw what a Stripling he was, he supposed he had been sent to mock him, and was very angry. He raised up his Club, intending to knock out the young Man's Brains, but *David* turned aside and escaped the Blow. He then threw a Stone at the Giant, which struck his Forehead, and he fell down: Then *David* ran to him before he could recover himself, drew out *Goliath's* Sword as he lay upon the Ground, and with it cut off his Head. *David* did many other great Things, because God assisted him; which made all the People admire him, and good *Jonathan*, the Son of *Saul*, loved him as his own Soul. But as bad People are always jealous of those who are better
liked

liked than themselves; so *Saul* hated *David*, and would have been glad to do him any Mischief if he could, though he was become his Son-in-law, being married to his Daughter.

He tried so often to put *David* to Death, that he was obliged to run away and hide himself, sometimes with the Prophet *Samuel*, and sometimes with the *Philistines*. But the *Philistines* grew suspicious, and took him for a Spy, so he durst not stay long with them. He wandered about in Desarts, and lodged in Caves, while *Saul* was almost mad with Fury that he could not find him. In the mean Time *David* gained many Friends, who went to him, and shared his Distresses; and there were several of the *Israelites* that assisted him. There was, however, one Man called *Nabal*, who was brutal and churlish, and behaved with Roughness and Ill-nature to him. But his Wife *Abigail*, a prudent, sensible Woman, was much concerned when she heard of it, and to save her Husband from the Resentment he had Reason to expect, she went to *David* to make all
the

the Excuses she could, and to ask his Pardon. *David* was so pleased with her Civility, that, for her Sake, he forgave her Husband; and soon after, when *Nabal* died, he married her, and thought himself very happy to have got such a discreet Woman for a Wife.

But still he could enjoy no Quiet, for *Saul* pursued him wherever he went. One Day *Saul* happened to go into a Cave where *David* was hid with two or three of his Friends in a Corner, out of Sight. Then *Saul* was in *David's* Power, and he could have ended all his Distresses, by putting his unjust Enemy to Death: But a good Man would suffer any Thing rather than take Revenge, or do a base Act, and would always return Good for Evil. So *David* let *Saul* escape, and yet that stubborn King continued still to be *David's* Enemy.

Another Time *Saul's* Life was again in *David's* Power, but no Provocation could tempt him to do him any Hurt, so they parted again; and then *David* to be entirely out of his Way, went and lived in the Country of the *Philistines*.

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Some Time after, a fresh War broke out between that Nation and the *Israelites*, in which *Saul* and *Jonathan* his Son were killed in Battle. When *David* heard the News he was much concerned for *Saul*, because he had been his Father-in-law and his King, and he grieved most exceedingly for *Jonathan*, who had always behaved to him as a Brother and a Friend. He made a fine Psalm called the Lamentation of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, and set it to Musick.

After the Time of Mourning was past, first two of the Tribes, and then the other ten acknowledged *David* King of *Israel*.

He ruled for a great while with Justice and Mercy, and was a wise and a great King. He never forgot the Friendship of *Jonathan* towards him, but treated a poor lame Son that he left behind, called *Mephibosheth*, with the same Affection that he did his own Children. All his Subjects were happy under his Government. He was very devout, and made a Number of fine Songs or Psalms. We have in the Bible an hundred and fifty mostly wrote

wrote by him, which are called the Psalms of *David*. Some of these are penitential, that is, wrote when he was penitent for Sins, and imploring God's Forgiveness; and some are Thanksgivings for Mercies received. Some describe the Goodness and Greatness, and all the Wonders of Almighty God, and others are prophetic, that is, filled with Prophecies of what should hereafter happen.

David also collected all the Riches he could get, either in Gold or Silver, Ivory, precious Stones or fine Timber, and laid them by, as Materials for building a great Temple at *Jerusalem*, such as we now call a Church, in which People meet to worship God. This was what he had chiefly at heart; but it was not the Will of God that the Temple should be begun, during *David's* Life Time. He was however, graciously pleased to acquaint him, by one of his Prophets, that he approved of his Intention, and that it should be executed in the Reign of *Solomon* his Son. In short, *David* was so religious and so good that all his Neighbours loved him, and God called him the Man after his own Heart,
and

and gave him every Blessing he could wish for.

Who would have thought that such a wise Prince could ever do wrong? But the foolish Pleasures of the World, the Riches he possessed, and the Respect every Body paid him tempted him to forget his Duty to God his Maker, and think of nothing but pleasing himself. Whoever does that will soon be led astray by the evil Spirit, who is always endeavouring to put bad Thoughts into our Heads, and persuading us to do every Sort of wicked Thing. It was just so with *David*, whenever he neglected studying to please God, and began to think of pleasing himself only, he fell into the greatest Sins; but God Almighty was so good as to send him great Afflictions, which made him think of his Sins and repent. After a great deal of Sorrow and resolving to amend his Life, the Almighty forgave him and blessed him again. The Sins of *David* were very great indeed, but his Sorrow for them was great too, and his Punishment very severe, which is what all Sinners must expect. *David* suffered great
Sickness

Sickness for his Crimes, and met with terrible Afflictions in his Family. They were all at Variance among each other, and *Absalom*, one of his Sons, rebelled against him. He also lost the Love of his People, for who can love a Person that has offended God? The greatest Part of them joined with *Absalom*, and made him King, and drove *David* out of *Jerusalem*, his capital City, but when God had sufficiently humbled him, he destroyed *Absalom's* Army, and the young Man himself lost his Life. The People then returned to *David* their old King. He grieved a long while for his Son *Absalom*, and took Care never to offend God any more. He lived to a great Age, and led a very pious Life, and God to reward him, permitted his Son *Solomon*, though but a youth, to succeed him to the Crown of *Israel*.

Q. Are the Psalms of *David* the same which are said at Church?

A. Yes, and they are divided into thirty Parts, that we may say them all in a Month, by repeating a few of them twice every

every Day, at Publick Prayers. But we must say them with our Hearts, as well as with our Mouths; for it is of no Use to repeat the Words of a Prayer, unless we think, at the same Time, what we are saying. There is nothing can be more offensive to God than to let our Thoughts ramble, either at public or private Prayer.

Q. Is it a Sin to divert ourselves, and to be merry?

A. Very far from it; God Almighty, who is Goodness itself, and loves us, permits us to be as merry, and to divert ourselves as well as we can, provided our Diversion or Mirth is not sinful, that is, does not hurt ourselves or others. When it can do no Harm, it is called innocent Mirth, and good People always feel Mirth and Pleasure, because they know that God Almighty loves them, and protects them. It is however, certainly a Sin to employ our whole Time in Diversion only, because that prevents all necessary and useful Business from being done. But as King David's Son says, in the Book of *Ecclesiastes*,

To

To every Thing there is a Season, and
a Time to every Purpose under Heaven,

A Time to be born, and a Time to die ;
a Time to plant, and a Time to pluck
away that which is planted,

A Time to weep, and a Time to laugh,
a Time to mourn, and a Time to dance.

Wise People, therefore, are always
careful to divide their Time in a proper
Manner.



C H A P. XVIII.

The Reign of King Solomon.

SOLOMON had been taught by his
Parents, that Religion and Virtue was
true Wisdom; and that true Wisdom is
more valuable than Riches, because it
procures us the Esteem of all the World,
and purchases eternal Happiness in the
next. Therefore, when he prayed for
God's Blessing, he asked for nothing but
Wisdom; and the Almighty was so
pleased

pleased with his Moderation, that he granted him the Wisdom he asked for, and Riches and Honours besides. By this Means he was the greatest King we ever heard of, and to this Day when we would praise any Body's Wisdom, we say they are as wise as *Solomon*. He did many good Things, which are mentioned in the Scriptures; and wrote some of the Books that are in it. One of them is called the Proverbs of *Solomon*. It is full of wise sayings, and pretty Thoughts, very improving and entertaining. He built the Temple of *Jerusalem*, which his Father left him Materials for, and Directions how it should be built and finished. Those Directions *David* had received from God himself; so that no Temple ever was so beautiful. We find the Description of it in the Holy Scriptures. *Solomon* also built a great Palace for himself, and several other fine Buildings. And his Wisdom was so much talked of Abroad, that the Queen of *Sheba* came from a distant Country, to see him, and admire the Wonders of his Court.

Yet,

96 *The Reign of King Solomon.*

Yet, even this great and good and wise Man went astray ; as *Adam* fell, with all his Innocence, so *Solomon* fell, with all his Wisdom. We all must remember to have read how careful *Abraham* was to chuse a good Wife for his Son *Isaac* ; and also how *Isaac* when he grew old, sent *Jacob* as far as *Padan-Aram*, two Days Journey, to marry one of his Cousins, because they had had a good Education. A good Woman behaves well to her Husband, and takes Care of his Family and Children : But *Solomon*, wise as he was, did not consider that. He took Wives from among bad People, that were Idolaters and idle, and did nothing but eat and drink and make merry. These bad Women persuaded *Solomon* to do like themselves, by which Means he fell from all his Glory. He was despised in his old Age, and a Prophet from God foretold him that the Crown of *Israel* should not continue in his Family ; so he died in Shame and Disgrace.

C H A P. XIX.

The Division of the Kingdom under
Rehoboam.

REHOBOAM, the Son of *Solomon*, succeeded him, but did not resemble him in Wisdom. He had not Sense enough either to ask it of God, or to consult the experienced old Men whom his Father used to employ in the Affairs of the Nation. This weak Prince, on the contrary, encouraged by his young and foolish Companions, behaved to his Subjects with such Pride and Severity that ten of the twelve Tribes rebelled against him, and made *Jeroboam*, the Son of *Nebat*, their King. Only two of the Tribes continued with *Rehoboam*, the Tribe of *Judah* and that of *Benjamin*; and God Almighty never permitted him nor his Sons to regain the rest. So that he remained only King of *Judah*, while *Jeroboam* was called King of *Israel*.

This *Jeroboam*, the Son of *Nebat*, was a very bad Man, and an Idolater, and so were his Sons that reigned after him, and

E

every

98 *The Captivity of the Israelites.*

every King that succeeded them. There was about twenty of them, one after another, that is, in Succession. *Omri*, the fourth King, built a great City, called *Samaria*, and it became the Capital, that is, the chief City in *Israel*, as *Jerusalem* was the capital City of the Kingdom of *Judah*.



C H A P. XX.

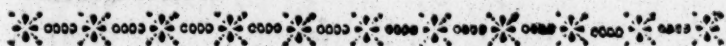
The Captivity of the Israelites.

GOD Almighty bore with their Idolatries, and other Sins, for some Time to leave them room to repent, but at last, as their Wickedness increased, he would suffer it no longer. So in the Reign of *Hoshea*, their last King, *Samaria* was taken by the King of *Assyria*, and *Hoshea* with almost all his People, were carried away into *Babylon*, the Capital of *Assyria*; and, at the same Time, a Number of *Babylonians* were sent to *Samaria*, to inhabit that City, and enjoy the Lands of the *Israelites*.

2. What

Q. What were the Names of all thofe Kings of *Israel*?

A. *Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jeroboam, Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hofhea.*



C H A P. XXI.

*The taking of Jerufalem, and the De-
struction of the Temple.*

AS for the Kingdom of *Judah*, it was governed by Kings of the Family of *David*, for fourteen Generations, and to the Number of twenty Kings after him. Some of thofe Kings were good Men, like their Grandfather *David*, fuch as *Afa, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Hezekiah*, and *Jofiah*, but moft of the others followed the Example of their Brethren, the Kings of *Israel*, and were Idolaters, like them. The People alfo of the one Kingdom became as bad as thofe of the other. The Goodnefs of God did not fail to warn them, by feveral Prophets, that he would

destroy them as a Nation, if they persisted in their Wickedness. We read in the Bible of *Elijah* and *Elisha*, great Prophets; also, of *Hosea*, *Amos*, *Zedekiah*, *Micaiah*, and a great Number of others, who were all sent for that Purpose. Not one of these were able to persuade the *Jews*, that is, the *Judeans*, to amend their Lives, and even the Example of the fatal End of the Kingdom of *Israel* was not sufficient to induce that of *Judah* to reform, so that in the Reign of *Zedekiah*, King of *Judah*, that Kingdom also was over-run by the *Afyrians*, who carried away the King and People to *Babylon*, and plundered the Temple of God.

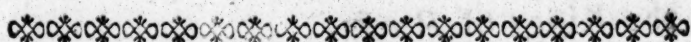
Q. What were the Names of the Kings of *Judah*, from *Rehoboam*?

A. *Rehoboam*, *Abijah*, *Asa*, *Jehosaphat*, *Jehoram*, *Ahaziah*, *Joash*, *Amaziah*, *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, *Hezekiah*, *Manasseh*, *Jesiah*, *Jehoahaz*, *Jehoiakim*, *Jehoiachin*, *Zedekiah*.

Q. Where can we find the History of all these Kings?

A. We can find a full Account of all these

The Return of the Captives, &c. 101
these Kings in that Part of the Bible
called the Books of *Samuel*, and in the
Books of *Kings*, and of *Chronicles*.



C H A P. XXII.

The Return of the Captives, and Re-
storation of the Temple.

THE *Jews* continued in the Land of
their Captivity about seventy Years.
At the End of that Time, *Cyrus*, King of
Persia, being also King of *Babylon*, God
Almighty put it in his Mind and Heart
to send Home the Children of *Israel*.

They were by that Time sufficiently
humbled, and very penitent, and never
relapsed into Idolatry again. God there-
fore took Compassion on them, and they
were enabled, after some Difficulties, to
settle themselves again at *Jerusalem*, and
repair and beautify the Temple, but they
could not make it so fine as it had been at
first. However, the High Priests and
Levites officiated in a regular Manner,
and the Service of the Temple was con-
ducted.

ducted with Decency, for they had the free Exercise of their Religion; though in most other Matters, they were obliged to submit to a Governor, appointed by the Kings of *Persia*.

We read of the Preservation of these Captives, of their Return, and of the Repairing of the Temple, and rebuilding the Walls of the City, in the Books of *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Esther*, which are Part of the Holy Bible. We also find in that divine and wonderful Volume, the Prophecies of *Isaiah*, of *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and twelve other lesser Prophets, which foretold all those great Events.



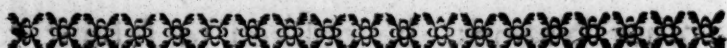
C H A P. XXIII.

Of the Four Monarchies.

THE next Thing the Prophets foretold was God's Revenge upon the *Assyrians* or *Babylonians*, whose City was to be destroyed by the *Persians*, for having treated the *Israelites* with such cruelty.
They

They also foretold that those *Persians* would afterwards be conquered by the *Greeks*, and that those *Greeks* would, at last, be overcome by the *Romans*, which *Romans*, would become Masters of the World; that the *Jews* would, as well as other Nations, be obliged to submit to them, and that after all those Things, our Saviour *Christ* would come into the World. All this has accordingly come to pass, and these four Monarchies, or Powers, have governed the World in their Turn. First, the *Assyrians* who subdued the two Kingdoms of *Israel* and *Judah*, and every other Country within their Reach. Secondly, the *Persians*, who, commanded by *Cyrus*, made themselves Masters of the proud City of *Babylon*, and permitted the *Jews* to return Home. Several other Kings of *Persia* succeeded him, till, thirdly, the *Greeks*, commanded by King *Alexander*, called, the Great, marched into *Persia*, beat their Armies, and took Possession of their Dominions. The *Jews* were frequently disturbed by them till they submitted to the *Romans*, who, fourthly, came out of a City called *Rome*, and, by degrees, vanquished every Na-

tion in the World. When every Country had yielded to them, and all Nations were at Peace, *Augustus Cæsar* was Emperor of *Rome*; at which happy Time our blessed Saviour came to redeem us all.



C H A P. XXIV.

Of the Book of Job.

I Have now given an Account of every Part of the Bible which is called the Old Testament, except the Book of *Job*. It contains the Life of that good Man, and is one of the finest Stories in the Holy Scripture. They do not tell us in what Time he lived; but he is mentioned as a Pattern of Goodness, Patience, and Submission to the Will of God. When he was rich, happy, and prosperous, he outdid all others as much in Goodness as in Prosperity. Those whom God particularly blesses in this World, are generally envied by ill-natured People, and especially by the evil Spirit, who hates all the Favourites of Heaven. He intreated the Almighty to permit him to torment

torment and afflict *Job*, in Hopes that might provoke him to do or say something wrong. God Almighty knew that *Job* would withstand all Temptation, and that he could afterwards make up to him any Sufferings he might undergo, by multiplying new Blessings upon him. He therefore gave him up for a Time to the evil Spirit, that the World might be acquainted with his Virtue, and take Example by it. No Man ever underwent harder Trials; for he was deprived of all his Fortune, his Friends, and his Children, and suffered the most painful Sickness; but those served to show his great Dependance upon God, and his Humility, and that the Devil had no Power over his Mind. When *Job's* Piety had been sufficiently manifested, God Almighty restored to him all he had lost, Fortune, Friends, Children, and Health, and added a great deal more, so that the latter End of his Life was still more prosperous than the Beginning had been.

Q. Are there no more Books in the Old Testament than those we have taken Notice of?

E 5

A. No,

A. No, for I have mentioned the five Books of *Moses*, *Joshua*, *Judges*, and the six historical Books before the Captivity : Also three Books relating to the return of the Captives ; the Psalms of *David*, the several Writings of King *Solomon*, the prophetical Books of *Isaiah*s, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*, the twelve lesser Prophets, and the Book of *Job*. All these together compleat those sacred Writings which we call the Old Testament. However we find in some Bibles, at the End of the Old Testament, the Books of *Esdras*, *Tobit*, *Judith*, and several others, which are called Apocryphal, that is, doubtful ; for the *Jews* only regarded them as Histories, and did not suppose them to have been wrote by divine Inspiration, as the Bible is. Since, therefore, the *Jews*, from whom we received the Bible, did not acknowledge the Apocrypha as Part of it, we have no Reason to believe that it is, but great Reason to believe that it is not ; for in many Places it is contrary to the Holy Scriptures. We therefore cannot depend upon the Truth of any Thing we read in these apocryphal Books, and only read them for Entertainment.

ment. But the Roman Catholicks believe every Word of them, though they are so contrary to Scripture, and that is one of the Causes of those People having fallen into so many Errors or Mistakes, in Matters of Religion.



C H A P. XXV.

The Life of our Saviour.

OUR Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, was born of the Virgin *Mary*, of whom *Isaias* prophesied, saying, *A Virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his Name Enmanuel, God with us.*

This divine Person had no earthly Father, for though *Mary's* Parents had contracted her to *Joseph*, they did not yet live together; and God Almighty was pleased to reveal to *Joseph* in a Dream, that his Wife *Mary* was the Woman foretold in the Scriptures, and that when the Child was born, he must give him the Name of *Jesus*. Soon after his Birth,

some wise Men from the Eastern Country, having been by some wonderful Means apprized of that happy Event, came to worship him in *Judea*. *Herod*, whom the *Romans* had set over the Land of *Judah*, was much alarmed at the News, fearing that *Jesus Christ* would be promoted to the Throne in his Room.

This bad Man, therefore, tried to find out the Child, with an Intention to destroy him; but *Joseph* and *Mary* were so poor, and so little known, that he could not discover him. Then cruel *Herod*, in order to make sure of him, commanded all the Infants to be put to Death, who were in or about *Bethlehem*, where it was foretold that *Christ* should be born. But God discovered this vile Intention to *Joseph* in a Dream, desiring him to make Haste, and take the Child and his Mother into *Egypt*. They went and staid there till God informed him by another Dream, that *Herod* was dead, and commanded him to return Home, but to go to *Nazareth*, and not to *Bethlehem*, for fear of *Herod's* Son, who then reigned, and who was as cruel as his Father.

When

When *Christ* was but twelve Years old, he astonished all who saw or heard of him, by the supernatural Wisdom he displayed. But before he made any Appearance as a Prophet, *John* the Baptist was sent out by God Almighty, to prepare People's Minds for a very great miraculous and holy Visitor; and he exhorted every Body to suffer themselves to be baptized. This Sacrament was instituted to express, by washing the Body with Water, when we receive the Name of *Christians*, that our Souls will be cleansed from all impure Thoughts and Desires, if we sincerely receive and obey the Doctrines of *Christ*.

When our Saviour was about thirty Years old, he began to exert himself suitably to the Intentions of his coming. First of all he desired *John* to baptize him, to show the Value he set upon the Ceremony. He was soon after attacked by the evil Spirit, who was anxious to discover whether he was the promised *Messiah* or not. He tempted him for forty Days in such a Manner, that if he had been a mere Man he could not have resisted; but the *Devil* could have no
Power

Power over the Son of God. When the Tempter had left him he began to call upon the People to repent and amend their Lives. He ascended a high Mountain, that he might be seen at a great Distance, and raising his Voice, preached a Sermon which exceeds all other Discourses that were ever heard. In it he teaches the Lord's Prayer, as a Model for all Addresses to the Divinity. He teaches us also that we must be humble, submissive, patient, and good-natured; in short, that we must neither do nor say, nor even think any Thing that is wrong, and that we must study to do all the good in our Power, even to our greatest Enemies. For by so doing, we imitate God himself, who blesses the Idolaters and Disobedient, as well as the Pious and Obedient, who sends no Afflictions but as Remedies or Preservatives, to make us better, or to keep us good, and who permits the Sun-shine and refreshing Showers, to visit the good and bad alike.

When our Saviour descended from the Mount, he practised all he had been preaching; for he went about doing
good,

good, and exercising his Almighty Power in favour of every Distress that came in his Way. He cured Distempers of all Kinds by a Word, or a single Touch. He made the Deaf to hear, the Lame to walk, the Blind to see, the Dumb to speak, and raised the Dead to Life. There was such Virtue, even about his mortal Body, that if any distempered Person touched it, or touched his Cloaths, in hopes of being cured, they were immediately well; and though he had no Lands or Money he satisfied the Hunger of many Thousands. The Story of his raising *Lazarus* from the Dead, and the whole Account of that Family exhibits the most pleasing Picture imaginable of Divine Benevolence, blended with human Tendernefs. Our blessed Lord, not content with doing all this good himself, resolved to extend it through his Disciples. He therefore called twelve, and commanded them to disperse themselves about to instruct the Ignorant, as he did, and to relieve every Kind of Distress; for which Purpose he endued them with the Power of working Miracles. He told them they would frequently meet with a
very

very bad return, but they ought to submit patiently for his Sake, and leave the Punishment to God; for that if we live in this World in ever so inoffensive a Manner, we must expect to have some Enemies.

He then went on, teaching his Disciples and the People every Thing that was useful for them to know. He told them also a great deal besides relating to the Mysteries of Religion. Such as the Nature of his Death and Suffering, of the Time and Manner of his second Coming to judge the World, of the State of departed Souls, of original Sin, of the Resurrection of the Body, and of the Day of Judgment. These Things he related only in distant Hints and Parables, because it is not necessary, nor indeed possible for us to comprehend them clearly in this Life. Divine Wisdom has told us just enough to excite us to do our Duty, and to support us in Trouble, why then should we desire to know more?

All these amazing Words and Discourses astonished every Body. Numbers
of

of the People loved and followed him, but the Priests, the Scribes, the Sadduces and Pharisees were against him from Envy and Jealousy. These last were Hypocrites, who pretended to be wiser and better than other Men, but were full of Pride and Deceit. Such Men always hate those who are truly good, especially when they find they are better liked than themselves.

They therefore persecuted our Lord, and tried to puzzle him with artful Questions, and draw him in to say or do something contrary to Law, in order to have a Pretence for putting him to Death. But he showed himself as much superior to them in Understanding as in Virtue, and often sent them away confounded at the Wisdom and Prudence of his Answers.

However, their Malice grew to such a Height, and they persuaded so many to unite with them, that our Saviour knew they would soon obtain their Wish, and as he came into the World on Purpose to suffer Death for our Sins, he prepared himself and his Disciples for that awful Event.

Event. 'Our gracious Lord reflecting, that after his Departure, their Hearts might be apt to swell with Pride from the Intimacy to which he had admitted them: this great Lord of Heaven and Earth resolved to lower their Minds by an Example of the most perfect and entire Humility. He, therefore, the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, the promised Messiah, was so far from assuming to himself any superior Dignity, that he condescended to kneel down and wash his Disciples Feet; the Feet even of *Judas*, who he knew would betray him. And, after he had finished, he sat down and discoursed with them upon the Virtue of Humility, in the most pathetic Terms.

On the Night that he was to fall into the Hands of his Enemies, he sat down to Supper with his Disciples, and acquainted them that one of that Company would betray him; and hinted that *Judas Iscariot* was the Man, after Supper he brake Bread and blessed it, and gave some to each of them, saying, *Take eat, this is my Body, which is broken for many. Eat this in Remembrance of me.* He also took

took the Cup of Wine, and gave it to them, saying, *This is my Blood which is shed for many, Drink this in Remembrance of me.* This is what we call the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which our gracious Master desires may be frequently taken as a Remembrance of what he has suffered, to purchase for us Forgiveness of Sins, and eternal Life. We ought to receive it with the greatest Thankfulness, and a sincere Resolution to amend our Lives; for unless we do the Will of God in every Thing, this Sacrament will be of no Benefit to us; but on the contrary, they who lead bad Lives, will offend God the more, by attending to outward Forms, while they neglect the weightier Matters of the Law. For our Saviour has said, *It is not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, that shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven.* This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the others undone. Ye shall know a Tree by its Fruits, and every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit, shall be hewn down and cast into the Fire, there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.

As

As for those whose Minds are baptized, as well as their Bodies, that is, who are cleansed from Wickedness, and truly thankful for the immense Favours that have been conferred upon them, with what pious Joy do they partake of this blessed Sacrament, and how must such a Commemoration strengthen their Minds, and confirm them in all Goodness!

The Roman Catholicks are so absurd as to believe, that what we eat in this Sacrament is changed into the real Body and Blood of *Jesus*. This is supposing, that our Lord eat of his own Body, for he supped with them, and that his Disciples fed upon it before he was dead. It is also supposing, that we eat our God every Time we communicate. It makes one Tremble to think of such horrid Blasphemy, and it grieves one to reflect, that the Priests of that Religion teach such Things, and are so uncharitable as to try to persuade People, that every Body will be damned who cannot believe it, and be a Roman Catholick. These Priests also will let none but themselves taste of the Cup, and give to all others only the first
Part

Part of the Sacrament, and not Bread, but a Wafer, though our Saviour expressly bids us all eat Bread and drink Wine, in Remembrance of him, and not the Clergy only, for he says, *Drink ye all of this.*

May the merciful God who has saved us Protestants from such great Mistakes, open the Minds of those poor deluded People, and may they see and repent of their idolatrous and superstitious Ways!

Soon after Supper, those to whom *Judas* had betrayed his Master, came and seized upon him and carried him away.

As to the Manner of his Examination before *Pilate*, his Crucifixion, his Resurrection, his Appearance to his Disciples after his burial, and his Ascension into Heaven. It is so finely related by the inspired Writers in that Part of the Holy Bible, called the New Testament, that the best Thing we can do is to read it over frequently and with Attention.

When

When we do that, we must reflect how odious all Sin is in the Sight of God, since the Disobedience of *Adam*, required all that Suffering in the innocent *Jesus* to atone for it, and to reconcile *Adam* and his Children to God.

Surely it will be a Warning to us to Sin no more, lest some greater Vengeance fall upon us.

Q. What Reason do the Priests give for that extraordinary Doctrine of Transubstantiation; or the Notion of the Bread and Wine being changed at the Sacrament, into the Body and Blood of *Christ*?

A. The only Reason they can give, is the Words of our Saviour, *This is my Body, and this is my Blood.* But he said at another Time, *I am a Door.* And yet, it is very plain, he did not mean to say, that he was really a Door; but like a Door, because, by him, People enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Another Time our Saviour said, *I am the Vine, and ye are the Branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth*

forth much Fruit. Every Body must allow that this can only mean, that he is like a Vine Tree, and we are like the Branches of it. Because, Vines bear good Fruit, and all who belong to him like Branches of a Tree to the Root of it, will produce many good Works, in consequence of the Doctrine they receive from him, and of the assisting Spirit which he gives them. In the same Manner our Saviour also said: This is my Body and this is my Blood, eat this in remembrance of me, drink this in remembrance of me. And, indeed, common Sense is sufficient to show us, that he only meant to compare the Bread to his Body, and the Wine to his Blood. And, as in Baptism, Water, which washes our Bodies, is compared to the Holy Spirit, which purifies our Hearts, so the Nourishment, which Bread and Wine affords our Bodies, may justly be compared to the substantial Benefit our Souls receive by the piercing of his Body on the Cross, and the shedding of his Blood.

C H A P. XXVI.

Of the Apostles.

AFTER the Books of the four Evangelists, *St. Matthew*, *St. Mark*, *St. Luke*, and *St. John*, we find a Book called, *The Acts of the Apostles*, in which there is an Account of what became of them after their Lord had left them. As for poor wicked *Judas*, his guilty Conscience drove him to such Despair, that he hanged himself. 'Tis thus that one Sin generally leads to another. If he had humbled himself, and implored Forgiveness of his Master, perhaps infinite Goodness might have taken Pity on him; but Self-Murder only added to the Crime he had before committed, for we have no Right to take away the Life that God has given. It is the highest Offence and a Sin of the most dangerous Kind; because, we may repent of other Sins, after having been guilty of them; but, after Death, there is no Repentance; for then our Doom is fixed. There are therefore very few People, if any, who are not
mad,

mad, that attempt to commit such a Crime. The other Apostles, or Disciples of *Christ*, did in Obedience to God's Commands, go about preaching the Gospel, and baptizing in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We read, that they very soon, according to the Promise of *Jesus*, were inspired by that Holy Ghost, with the Knowledge of all Languages, with the Power of working Miracles, with heavenly Wisdom and divine Assistance, to support them in all their Troubles, and in the Hour of Death.

They almost all died Martyrs to the Faith, that is, were put to cruel Deaths, by barbarous Men, because they would persist in speaking the Truth, but *great was their Reward in Heaven*. We also find, by that Book, and by the Epistles, that is, Letters of *St. Peter*, that he was not greater than the rest of the Apostles, neither is it mentioned in the Bible that he ever was Bishop of *Rome*: And yet the Roman Catholicks pretend that he was not only Bishop of *Rome*, but Head of the whole Church of *Christ*; and that all

Bishops or Popes of *Rome* who have been since that Time, being his Successors, or, as in his Place, must be obeyed in all Matters of Religion : And for this Obedience, the Roman Catholicks pay to the Pope or Bishop of *Rome*, they are often called Papists.

But if there was any Truth in what they suppose about *St. Peter*, and about the Pope being his Successor, God would certainly have revealed it to us in his divine Book, which he himself tells us, contains all that is necessary to be known; and God also says, “ *If any Man add to these my Sayings, let him be accursed.*”

God forbid that we should acknowledge any Head of the Church but *Christ*. We are Christians, and the Church the Catholick Church, that is, the whole Body of *Christians*, scattered all over the World, must believe in *Christ*, and depend upon him, and upon no other. “ *I, says he, am the true Shepherd, and will take Care of my Flock.*”

St. *Paul* had not been a Disciple of *Christ*, but had been a *Jew*, and persecuted the Church of *Jerusalem*, that is, the Assembly of *Christians* there. God, however, was pleased to convert him at last from his Sins, and he became a good Christian, and a zealous Apostle. St. *Peter*, and the other Disciples, seemed to confine themselves chiefly to the Conversion of the *Jews*; but St. *Paul* worked upon a larger Plan, for he addressed himself to the Heathens also, and converted an infinite Number of them. He was as much respected as St. *Peter*, and even went twice to *Rome* and preached the Gospel there as well as he. St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* were great Friends, and neither of them pretended to be more than Fellow Labourers in the Work to which they were appointed. St. *Paul*, after he had been at *Rome*, wrote a long Letter to the *Romans*, and by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells them in it what they are to believe and to do. Surely he would not have done this if St. *Peter* was there as supreme Bishop: Nor would the Holy Spirit have inspired him to write so long a Letter to *Rome*, if the Head of the

Church was afterwards to be established there; for it must be allowed that God always knows what is to come, and never does any Thing in vain.

St. *Peter* himself also wrote two Epistles, one of which is dated from *Babylon*, a long Way from *Rome*; and neither of the Epistles are directed to the Church of *Rome*, but to all Strangers, new Christians, scattered about *Pontes*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, *Asia*, and *Bythinia*; that is, to all the converted *Jews* in those Places, for they were Strangers there.

St. *John* also wrote three Epistles, one to the universal Church, that is, the general Society of Christians all over the World, and is so far from recommending Obedience to the Bishop or Pope of *Rome*, that he does not once mention him, but earnestly intreats all Christians to trust in God only, and obey his Laws, according to the Understanding he has given us: For, says he, *We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even*
in

in his Son Jesus Christ. *This is the true God and eternal Life.* And this is exactly the Belief of us Protestants. The only Reason the Papists can give for their Notion about *St. Peter*, is drawn from a Discourse our Saviour held with him one Day. In this Discourse he praised him for having so much Faith as to believe him to be the Son of God. *Jesus* called him *Peter*, that is, a Stone, and said, upon this Stone I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. *Jesus* also told *Peter* he would give him the Keys of Heaven, and that those he bound on earth should be bound in Heaven, and those he loosed on Earth should be loosed in Heaven. It is impossible for us to know what is the direct Meaning of these Words. There are many Ways of interpreting them; but we may be very sure they could not mean that *St. Peter* should be Pope of *Rome*, and that all Christians should obey him; for, if it had been so, he would have expected that Obedience, and all Christians would have paid it him; but we see in the Bible that none did, and that he did not require it; neither did any of the
other

other Apostles give Way to him, as we have already observed. It appears also very plainly from the Epistles of St. *John*, that St. *John* was certainly no Papist, and if it is necessary for Salvation to be one, surely our Saviour would have let him at least into that Secret, for he was his favourite Disciple.

We have, besides these, several other Epistles, wrote by different Apostles, who make no mention of *Rome* or Popery; but they warn us in general, that many false Prophets will arise, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. They strictly charge us to beware of them, and not to believe even an Angel from Heaven, if he should teach us any Thing which is not in the Scriptures.

The last Book in the New Testament, is the Revelations of St. *John*, which is so very mysterious and sublime, that it is entirely beyond any human Capacity to comprehend; and very probably it was wrote on purpose to confound our Vanity, and to show us, that there are many of the

the Designs and Works of our Creator, which, though we examine and study incessantly, we shall never be able to explain; and the more we aim at explaining what is above the reach of our Capacities, so much the more shall we be liable to fall into dangerous Mistakes. There may be though, perhaps, some superior Genius's, who with the help of deep Study, and carefully comparing of Passages in different Authors, have been able to form some just Conjectures with Regard to Futurity, but common Capacities may, by making the same Attempt, fall into fatal Errors. Let therefore such as we be satisfied to wait till the Accomplishment explains the Predictions; and in the mean Time content ourselves, like *St. Paul*, with knowing nothing but *Christ* crucified, and let us aim at nothing but imitating his virtuous and amiable Life.

*Now teach the Creed, and the Te Deum
Laudamus.*

F I N I S.

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